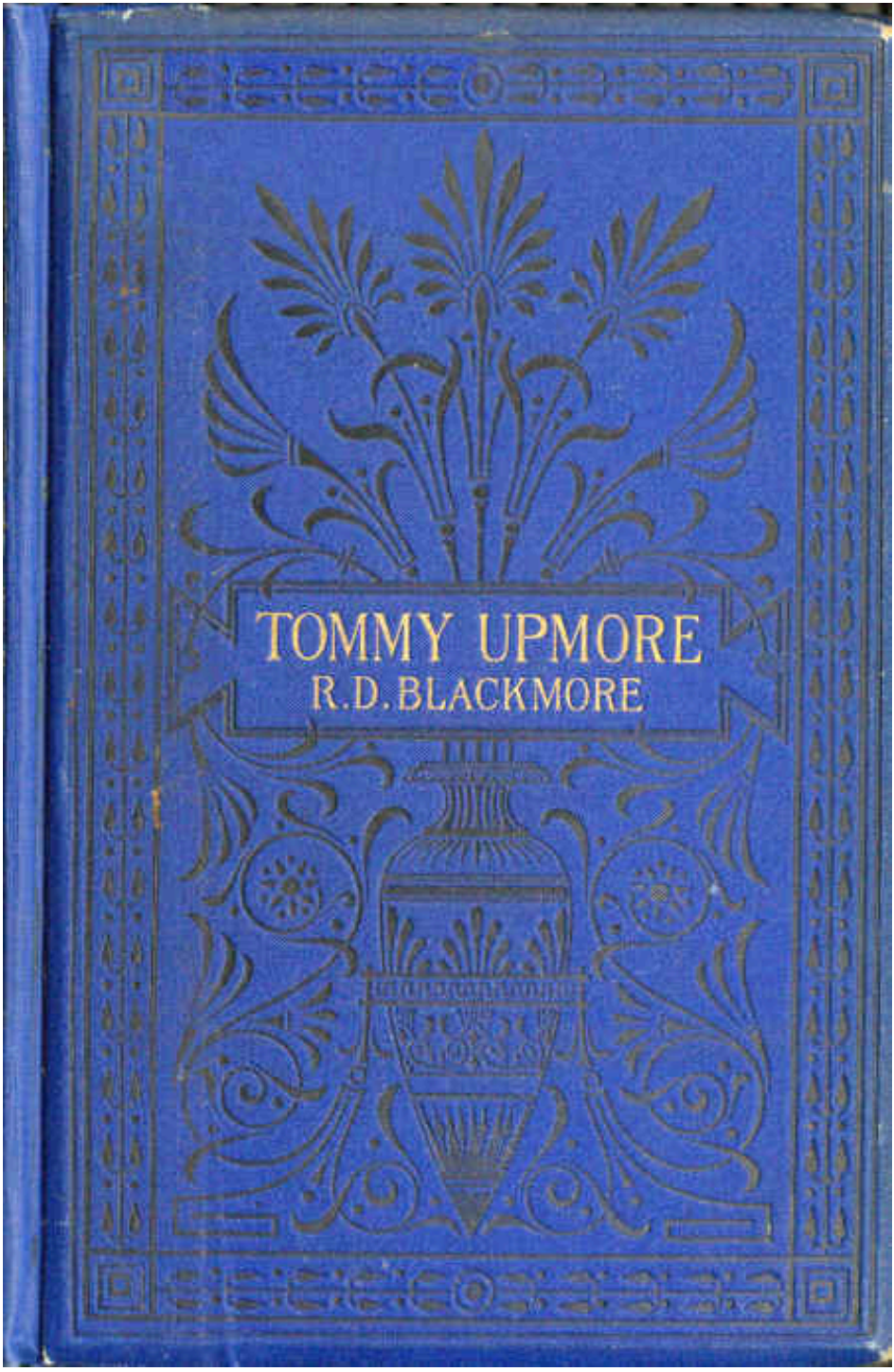

TOMMY UPMORE
R.D. BLACKMORE

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE REMARKABLE HISTORY OF SIR THOMAS UPMORE, BART., M.P., FORMERLY KNOWN AS "TOMMY UPMORE" ***

THE REMARKABLE HISTORY OF SIR THOMAS UPMORE, BART., M.P.,

FORMERLY KNOWN AS

"TOMMY UPMORE."

Non usitatâ, non tenui ferar
Pennâ——

A NEW EDITION.

LONDON:
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE & RIVINGTON,
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PREFACE.

When Sir Thomas Upmore came, and asked me to write a short account of his strange adventures, I declined that honour; partly because I had never seen any of his memorable exploits. Perhaps that matters little, while his history so flourishes, by reason of being more creditable, as well as far more credible, than that of England, for the last few years.

Still, in such a case, the man who did the thing is the one to tell it. And his veracity has now become a proverb.

My refusal seemed to pain Sir Thomas, because he is so bashful; and no one can see him pained, without grieving for his own sake also, and trying to feel himself in the wrong.

This compelled me to find other arguments; which I did as follows:—

"First, my dear sir, in political matters, my humble view's are not strong, and trenchant—as yours are become by experience—but exceedingly large, and lenient; because I have never had anything at all to do with politics.

"Again, of science,—the popular name for almost any speculation, bold enough,—I am in ignorance equally blissful, if it were not thrilled with fear. What power shall resist the wild valour of the man, who proves that his mind is a tadpole's spawn, and then claims for that mind supreme dominion, and inborn omniscience? Before his acephalous rush, down go piled wisdom of ages, and pinnacled faith, cloud-capped heights of immortal hope, and even the mansions everlasting, kept for those who live for them."

"All those he may upset," replied Sir Thomas, with that sweet and buoyant smile, which has saved even his supernatural powers, from the sneers of those below him; "or at least, he may fancy that he has done it.

But to come to facts,—can he upset, or even make head, or tail, of such a little affair as I am? Not one of his countless theories about me has a grain of truth in it; though he sees me, and feels me, and pokes me in the side, and listens, as if I were a watch run down, to know whether I am going. I assure you, that to those who are not frightened by his audacity, and fame, his 'links of irrefragable proof' are but a baby's dandelion chain. In chemistry alone, and engineering, has science made much true advance. The main of the residue is arrogance."

"In that branch of science, we are all Professors," I answered, to disarm his wrath; knowing that, in these riper years, honest indignation wrought upon his system, as youthful exultation once had done; and I could not afford to have a hole made in my ceiling. "However, Sir Thomas, I shall stick to my resolve. Though your life—when its largeness is seen aright—will be an honour to the history of our race, justice comes before honour; and only you can do justice to it."

Humility, which competes with truth, for the foremost place in his character, compelled him to shake his head at this; and he began again, rather sadly.

"My purpose is a larger one, than merely to talk of my own doings. I want to put common sense into plain English, and to show—as our medical men show daily—that the body is beyond the comprehension of the mind. The mind commands the body to lie down, and be poked at, and probed, and pried into, with fifty subtle instruments, or even to be cut up, and analysed alive; and then understands never the more of it. If the mind can learn nothing of the body it lives in, grows, rejoices, and suffers with, how can it know all about it, for millions of years before either existed? How can it trace their joint lineage up to a thing, that had neither a head, nor a body?

"Go to; what I offer is not argument, but fact; and I care not the head of their ancestor for them. But if I write it, will you remove whatever may offend a candid mind?"

"If you offend no mind but that," said I, being fresh from a sharp review of something I had written; "you will give small offence indeed; and to edit you will be a sinecure."

Both these predictions have proved correct; except indeed that a few kind readers of sadly unscientific mind have hankered for some explanation of parts which they failed to witness.

The reply is truly simple—"if you were not there the fault was yours; here are the facts as in evidence, better supported, and less strange, than those you accept without a wink; and perhaps your trouble in realising a case of specific levity proceeds from nothing but your own excessive specific gravity."

R. D. Blackmore.

1885.

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TOMMY UPMORE.

CHAPTER I.
SIGNS OF EMINENCE.

If I know anything of mankind, one of them needs but speak the truth to secure the attention of the rest, amazed as they are at a feat so far beyond their own power and experience. And I would not have troubled any one's attention, if I could only have been let alone, and not ferreted as a phenomenon.

When the facts, which I shall now relate, were fresh and vivid in the public mind, it might have been worth twenty guineas to me to set them in order and publish them. Such curiosity, then, was felt, and so much of the purest science talked, about my "abnormal organism," that nine, or indeed I may say ten, of the leading British publishers went so far as to offer me £20,[1] with a chance of five dollars from America, if I would only write my history!

But when a man is in full swing of his doings and his sufferings, how can he stop to set them down, for the pleasure of other people? And even now, when, if I only tried, I could do almost as much as ever, it is not with my own consent that you get this narrative out of me. How that comes to pass, you shall see hereafter.

Every one who knows me will believe that I have no desire to enlarge a fame, which already is too much for me. My desire is rather to slip away from the hooks and crooks of inquirers, by leaving them nothing to lay hold of, not even a fibre to retain a barb; myself remaining like an open jelly, clear, and fitter for a spoon than fork,—as there is said to be a fish in Oriental waters, which, being hooked, turns inside out, and saves both sides by candour.

One reason why I now must tell the simple truth, and be done with it, is that big rogues have begun to pile a pack of lies about me, for the sake of money. They are swearing one another down, and themselves up, for nothing else than to turn a few pounds out of me; while never a one of them knows as much as would lie on a sixpence about me. Such is the crop of crop-eared fame!

Now, if there is any man so eminent as to be made money of, surely he ought to be allowed to hold his own pocket open. Otherwise, how is he the wiser for all the wonder concerning him? And yet those fellows, I do assure you, were anxious to elevate me so high, that every sixpence pitched at me should jump down into their own hats. This is not to my liking; and I will do my utmost to prevent it. And when you know my peculiar case, you will say that I have cause for caution.

So fleeting is popularity, such a gossamer the clue of history, that within a few years of the time when I filled a very large portion of the public eye, and was kept in great type at every journal office, it may even be needful for me to remind a world, yet more volatile than myself, of the thrilling sensation I used to create, and the great amazement of mankind.

These were more natural than wise; for I never was a wonder to myself, and can only hope that a truthful account of my trouble will commend me, to all who have time enough to think, as a mortal selected by nature for an extremely cruel experiment, and a lesson to those who cannot enjoy her works, without poking sticks at them.

My father was the well-known Bucephalus Upmore—called by his best friends "Bubbly Upmore"—owner of those fine soap-boiling works, which used to be the glory of old Maiden Lane, St. Pancras. He was one of the best-hearted men that ever breathed, when things went according to his mind; blest with every social charm, genial wit, and the surprising products of a brisk and poetical memory. His figure was that of the

broadest Briton, his weight eighteen stone and a half, his politics and manners Constitutional all over. At every step he crushed a flint, or split a contractor's paving-stone, and an asphalt walk was a quagmire to him.

My mother also was of solid substance, and very deep bodily thickness. She refused to be weighed, when philosophers proposed it; not only because of the bad luck that follows, but also because she was neither a bull, nor a pen of fat pigs, nor a ribboned turkey. But her husband vouched her to be sixteen stone; and if she had felt herself to be much less, why should she have scorned to step into the scales, when she understood all the rights of women?

These particulars I set down, simply as a matter of self-defence, because men of science, who have never seen me, take my case to support their doctrine of "Hereditary Meiocatobarysm," as they are pleased to call it, presuming my father to have been a man of small specific gravity, and my mother a woman of levity. They are thoroughly welcome to the fact, out of which they have made so much, that the name of my mother's first husband was Lightbody—Thomas Lightbody, of Long Acre, a man who made springs for coaches. But he had been in St. Pancras churchyard, seven good years before I was born; and he never was mentioned, except as a saint, when my father did anything unsaintly.

But a truce to philosophy, none of which has ever yet bettered my condition. Let every tub stand, or if stand it cannot, let every tub fly on its own bottom. Better it is to have no attempt at explanation of my case, than a hundred that stultify one another. And a truly remarkable man has no desire to be explained away.

Like many other people, who have contrived to surprise the world before they stopped, I did not begin too early. As a child, I did what the other children did, and made no attempt to be a man too soon. Having plenty of time on my hands, I enjoyed it, and myself, without much thought. My mother alone perceived that nature intended me for greatness, because I was the only child she had. And when I began to be a boy, I took as kindly as any boy to marbles, peg-top, tip-cat, toffy, lollipops, and

fireworks, the pelting of frogs, and even of dogs, unless they retaliated, and all the other delights included in the education of the London boy; whose only remarkable exploit is to escape a good hiding every day of his life.

But as a straw shows the way of the wind, a trifle or two, in my very early years, gave token of future eminence. In the days of my youth, there was much more play than there ever has been since; and we little youngsters of Maiden Lane used to make fine running at the game of "I spy," and even in set races. At these, whenever there was no wind, I was about on a par with the rest of my age, or perhaps a little fleeter. But whenever a strong wind blew, if only it happened to be behind my jacket, Old Nick himself might run after me in vain; I seemed not to know that I touched the ground, and nothing but a wall could stop me. Whereas, if the wind were in front of my waistcoat, the flattest-footed girl, even Polly Windsor, could outstrip me.

Another thing that happened to me was this, and very unpleasant the effects were. My mother had a brother, who became my Uncle William, by coming home from sea, when everybody else believed him drowned and done for. Perhaps to prove himself alive, he made a tremendous noise in our house, and turned everything upside down, having a handful of money, and being in urgent need to spend it. There used to be a fine smell in our parlour, of lemons, and sugar, and a square black bottle; and Uncle William used to say, "Tommy, I am your Uncle Bill; come and drink my health, boy! Perhaps you will never see me any more." And he always said this in such a melancholy tone, as if there was no other world to go to, and none to leave behind him.

A man of finer nature never lived, according to all I have heard of him. Wherever he might be, he regarded all the place as if it were made for his special use, and precisely adapted for his comfort; and yet as if something was always coming, to make him say "good-bye" to it. He had an extraordinary faith in luck, and when it turned against him, off he went.

One day, while he was with us, I came in with an appetite ready for dinner, and a tint of outer air upon me, from a wholesome play on the cinder-heaps. "Lord, bless this Tommy," cried Uncle William; "he looks as if he ought to go to heaven!" And without another word, being very tall and strong, he caught hold of me under the axle of my arms, to give me a little toss upward. But instead of coming down again, up I went, far beyond the swing of his long arms. My head must have gone into the ceiling of the passage, among the plaster and the laths; and there I stuck fast by the peak of my cap, which was strapped beneath my chin with Spanish leather. To see, or to cry, was alike beyond my power, eyes and mouth being choked with dust; and the report of those who came running below is that I could only kick. However, before I was wholly done for, somebody fetched the cellar-steps, and with very great difficulty pulled me down.

Uncle William was astonished more than anybody else, for everybody else put the blame upon him; but he was quite certain that it never could have happened, without some fault on my part. And this made a soreness between him and my mother, which (in spite of his paying the doctor's bill for my repairs, as he called it) speedily launched him on the waves again, as soon as his money was got rid of.

This little incident confirmed my mother's already firm conviction that she had produced a remarkable child. "The Latin Pantheon is the place for Tommy," she said to my father, every breakfast time; "and to grudge the money, Bucephalus, is like flying in the face of Providence."

"With all my heart," father always answered, "if Providence will pay the ten guineas a quarter, and £2 15*s*. for extras."

"If you possessed any loftiness of mind," my mother used to say, while she made the toast, "you would never think twice of so low a thing as money, against the education of your only child; or at least you would get them to take it out in soap."

"How many times must I tell you, my dear, that every boy brings his own quarter of a pound? As for their monthly wash, John Windsor's boy, Jack, is there, and they get it out of him."

"That makes it so much the more disgraceful," my mother would answer, with tears in her eyes, "that Jack Windsor should be there, and no Tommy Upmore! We are all well aware that Mr. Windsor boils six vats for one of ours; and sixty, perhaps, if he likes to say it. But, on the other hand, he has six children against our one; and which is worth the most?"

My father used to get up nearly always, when it came to this, and take his last cup standing, as if his work could not wait for him. However, it was forced into his mind, more and more every morning, that my learning must come to a question of hard cash, which he never did approve of parting with. And the more he had to think of it, the less he smiled about it. At last, after cold meat for dinner three days running, he put his best coat on and walked off straightway for the *Partheneion*, which is in Ball's Pond, Islington. He did not come home in at all a good temper, but boiled a good hour after boiling time, and would not let any one know, for several days, what had gone amiss with him.

For my part, having, as behoves a boy, no wild ambition to be educated, and hearing from Jack Windsor what a sad case he was in, I played in the roads, and upon the cinder-hills, and danced defiance at the classic pile, which could be seen afar sometimes, when the smoke was blowing the other way. But while I was playing, sad work went on, and everything was settled without my concurrence. Mrs. Rumbelow herself, the Doctor's wife, lady president of the college, although in a deeply interesting state—as dates will show hereafter—not only came in a cab to visit my mother, but brought with her on the dicky, as if he were nobody, the seventh nephew of the Lord Mayor of London, who could do a Greek tree, if it was pencilled out.

This closed all discussion, and clenched my fate, and our tailor was ordered to come next morning. My father had striven his utmost to get me taken as a day-boy, or at any rate to be allowed to keep a book

against the Muses. But Mrs. Rumbelow waved her hand, and enlarged upon liberal associations, and the higher walks of literature, to such an extent that my father could not put a business foot in anywhere. And before I was sent to bed that night, when I went for my head to be patted, and to get a chuck below the chin, he used words which hung long in my memory.

"Poor Tommy, thy troubles are at hand;" he said, with a tender gaze at me beneath his pipe. "They can't make no profit from the victualling of thy mind; but they mean to have it out of thy body, little chap. 'Tis a woe as goes always to the making of a man. And the Lord have mercy on thee, my son Tommy!"

FOOTNOTE:

[1] Sir Thomas cannot be accepted here, without a good-sized grain of salt. Exciting as his adventures are, and sanguine as his nature is, what can he be thinking of, in the present distress of publisher, strict economy of libraries, and bankruptcy of the United States?

CHAPTER II.
ITUR AD ASTRA.

The grandest result of education is the revival of the human system, which ensues when it is over. If it be of all pangs the keenest to remember joy in woe, and of all pleasures the sweetest to observe another's travail, upon either principle, accommodated (as all principles are) to suit the purpose, how vast the delight of manhood in reflecting upon its boyhood!

Dr. Rumbelow, of the *Partheneion*, which is in Trotter's Lane, Ball's Pond, combined high gifts of nature with rich ornaments of learning. In virtue of all this, he strove against the tendency of the age towards flippancy, and self-indulgence, the absence of every high principle, and the presence of every low one. Having to fill both the heads and the stomachs of thirty-five highly respectable boys, he bestirred himself only in the mental part, and deputed to others the bodily—not from any greed, or want of feeling, but a high-minded hatred of business, and a lofty confidence in woman. So well grounded was this faith, that Mrs. Rumbelow never failed to provide us with fine appetites.

Here, and hence, I first astonished the weak minds of the public, and my own as much as anybody's. Although we had several boys of birth, the boy of largest brains and body took the lead of all of us. And this was Bill Chumps, now Sir William Chumps, the well-known M.P. for St. Marylebone. His father was what was then called a "butcher," but now a "purveyor of animal provisions." He supplied under contract the whole *Partheneion*; and his meat was so good that we always wanted more.

Bill Chumps, being very quick at figures, had made bright hits about holidays impending, by noting the contents of the paternal cart, and blowing the Sibylline leaves of the meat-book, handed in by the foreman.

But even Chumps was not prepared for a thing that happened one fine Friday.

We had been at work all the afternoon, or, at any rate, we had been in school; and a longing for something more solid than learning began to rise in our young breasts.

"Oh, shouldn't I like a good pig's fry?" the boy next to me was whispering.

"Or a big help out of a rump-steak pie?" said the fellow beyond him, with his slate-sponge to his mouth.

But Chumps said, "Bosh! What's the good of pigs and pastry? Kidneys, and mushrooms, is my ticket, Tommy. Give us the benefit of your opinion."

Chumps was always very good to me, although I was under his lowest waistcoat-button. For my father was a very good customer of that eminent butcher his father; not only when he wanted a choice bit of meat, but also as taking at a contract-price all bones that could not be sent out at a shilling a pound, as well as all the refuse fat, which now makes the best fresh butter.

In reply to that important question, I looked up at Chumps, with a mixture of hesitation and gratitude. Being a sensitive boy, I found it so hard to give an opinion without offence to elder minds, yet so foolish to seem to have no opinion, and to spoil all the honour of being consulted. A sense of responsibility made me pause, and ponder, concerning the best of all the many good things there are to eat, and to lay "mechanically," as novelists express it, both hands upon a certain empty portion of my organization, when Dr. Rumbelow arose!

We did not expect him to get up yet for nearly three-quarters of an hour, unless any boy wanted caning; and at first a cold tremor ran through our inmost bones, because we respected him so deeply. But a glance at his countenance reassured us. The doctor stood up, with his college-cap on,

a fine smile lifting his gabled eyebrows (as the evening sun lights up gray thatch), his tall frame thrown back, and his terrible right hand peacefully, under his waistcoat, loosening the button of didactic cincture. He spread forth the other hand, with no cane in it; and a yawn—such as we should have had a smack for—came to keep company with his smile.

"Boys!" he shouted, sternly at first, from the force of habit when we made a noise; "boys, Lacedæmonians, Partheneionidæ, hearken to the words which I, with friendly meaning, speak among you. It has been ordained by the powers above, holding Olympian mansions, that all things come in circling turn to mortal men who live on corn. Times there are for the diligent study of the mighty minds of old, such as we, who now see light of sun, and walk the many-feeding earth, may never hope to equal. But again there are seasons, when the *dies festi* must be held, and the *feriæ Latinæ*, which a former pupil of mine translated 'a holiday from Latin.' Such a season now is with us. Once more it has pleased the good Lucina to visit our humble *tugurium*; and we are strictly called upon to observe the *meditrinalia*. Since which things are so, it behoves me to proclaim to all of you *feriæ tridui imperativæ*."

The doctor's speech had been so learned, that few of us were able to make out his meaning. But Chumps was a boy of vast understanding, and extraordinary culture.

"Three days' holiday. Holloa, boys, holloa!" cried Chumps, with his cap going up to the roof. "Three days' holiday! Rump-steak for breakfast, and lie a-bed up to nine o'clock. Hurrah, boys! holloa louder, louder, louder! Again, again, again! Why, you don't half holloa!"

To the ear of reason it would have been brought home, that the boys were holloaing quite loud enough; and of that opinion was our master, who laid his hands under his silvery locks, while the smile of good-will to us, whom he loved and chastened, came down substantially to the margin of his shave. But behold, to him thus beholding, a new and hitherto unheard-of prodigy, wonderful to be told, arose! He sought for

his spectacles, and put them on; and then for his cane, and laid hold of it —because he beheld going up into the air, and likely to get out of his reach, a boy!

It is not for me to say how I did it. Nobody was more amazed than I was; although after all that had happened ere now to me, I might have been prepared for it. Much as I try to remember what my feelings were, all I can say is that I really know not; and perhaps the confusion produced by going round so (to which I was not yet accustomed), and of looking downward at the place I used to stand on, helped to make it hard for me to think what I was up to.

With no consideration, as to what I was about, and no sense of being out of ordinary ways, I found myself leaving all the ground, and its places, not with any jump, or other kind of rashness, but gently, equably, and in good balance, rising to the shoulders of the other little chaps, and then over the heads of the tallest ones. My sandals, because of the weather being warm, were tied with light-blue ribbon, according to the wishes of my mother; and these made a show which I looked down at, while everybody else stared up at them.

Chumps was a very tall boy for his age, by reason of all the marrow-bones he got; and the same thing had gifted him with high courage. So that while all the other boys could only stare, or run away, if their nerves were quick, he made a spring with both hands at my feet, to fetch me back to the earth again. And at the same instant he said, "Tommy!" in the very kindest tone of voice, entreating me to come down to him.

I do not exaggerate in saying that I strove with all my power to do this; and with his kind help I might have done it, if the string of my shoe had been sewed in. But unhappily, like most things now, it was made for ornament more than use; and so it slipped out and was left in his hand; while, much against my will, I rose higher and higher. At the same time I found myself going round and round, so that I could not continue to

observe the countenance of Dr. Rumbelow, gazing sternly, and with some surprise, at me. But I saw him put on his spectacles, which was always a bad sign for us.

"*Capnobatæ* is the true reading in Strabo, as I have so long contended. Fetch me a cane!—a long, long, cane!" the doctor shouted, as I still went up. "This is the spirit of the rising age! I have long expected something of this kind. I will quell it, if I have to tie three canes together. Thomas Upmore, come down, that I may cane you. Not upon my head, boy, or how can I do it?"

For no sooner had I heard what was likely to befall me, than my heart seemed to turn into a lump of cold lead. At once my airy revolutions ceased, my hands (which had been hovering like butterflies) stopped, and dropped, like beetles that have struck against a post, and down I came plump, with both feet upon the tassel of the trencher-cap upon the doctor's head.

This must have been a very trying moment, both for his patience and my courage, and it is not fair to expect me to remember everything that happened. However, I feel that if I had been caned, there would have been a mark upon my memory; even as boys bear the limits of the parish in their minds, through their physical geography. Likely enough my head was giddy, from so much revolving; and Chumps living near us marched me home, with a big lexicon strapped on my back, to prevent me from trying to fly again.

CHAPTER III.
THE DAWN OF SCIENCE.

Most people, and more especially our writers of fiction, history, philosophy, and so forth, indulge in reflection, at those moments, when they are soaring above our heads; but I have always found myself so unlucky in this matter, as in many others, that nothing would ever come into my head, when aloft, to be any good when I came down. Or, at least only once, as will be shown hereafter; and that was the exception, which proves the rule.

Otherwise, I might now give many nice and precise descriptions of "variant motions and emotions, both somatic and psychical"—as Professor Brachipod expressed them—which must, according to his demonstration, have been inside me, at my first flight. Very likely they were; and even if they were not, it would never pay me to be positive—or negative perhaps is the proper word now—because ignorant science is remunerative, and nothing can be got by impugning it.

Yet that consideration, I assure you, has nothing to do with my present silence. I am silent, simply because I know nothing; and if all so placed would try my plan, how much less would be said and written! Nevertheless all biologists, psychologists, anthropologists, and the rest of our race who make it their study (after proving it wholly below their heed) these men, if they deign to be called such, have a claim upon me for all my facts; which I will not grudge, when I know them.

From the very outset, they felt this; and my father and mother, who had not slept well, through talking so much of my above adventure—recounted perhaps with some embellishment by Chumps—hardly had got through their breakfast before some eminent "scientists" were at them. For my part, having made a hearty supper, (after long scarcity of

butcher's meat,) or perhaps from having swallowed so much air, I had slept long and soundly, and was turning for another good sleep, when I heard great voices.

"Madam, allow me to express surprise," were the words which came up to me, through the ceiling, at the place where my head had made the hole, "extreme surprise at the narrowness of your views. Must I come to the conclusion, that you refuse to forward the interests of science?"

"Sir," replied mother, who was always polite, when she failed to make out what people meant, "science is what I don't know from the moon. But I do know what my Tommy is."

"My dear Mrs. Upmore," was the answer, in a soft sweet voice, which I found afterwards to be that of Professor Brachipod, "in consulting the interests of science, we shall consult those of the beloved Tommy. His existence is so interwoven with a newly formed theory of science"——

"You impudent hop'-my-thumb, what do you mean," broke in a deep sound, which I knew to be my father's, "by calling my wife your dear indeed? First time as ever you set eyes on her. Out you go, and no mistake."

Upon this ensued a heavy tread, and a little unscientific squeak; and out went Professor Brachipod, as lightly as if on the wings of his theory.

"Upmore, this violence is a mistake," another and larger voice broke in, as my father came back quietly; "the Professor's views may be erroneous; but to eliminate him, because of somatic inferiority, is counter to the tendency of the age. My theory differs from his, *toto cœlo*. But in the cause of pure reason, I protest against unmanly recourse to physics."

"You shall have the same physick, if you don't clear out;" said my father, as peaceable a man as need be, till his temper was put up; "an Englishman's house is his castle. No science have a right to come spoiling his breakfast. You call me unmanly, in your big words. You are a big man, and now I'll tackle you. Out goes Professor Jargoon."

There was some little scuffle, before this larger Professor was "eliminated," because he was a strong man, and did not like to go; but without much labour he was placed outside.

"Now, if either of you two chaps comes back," my father shouted from his threshold, "the science he gets will be my fist. And lucky for him, he haven't had it yet."

Running to the window of my room, I saw the professors, arm-in-arm, going sadly up the cinder-heaps; and glad as I was to be quit of them, I did not like the way of it. However, I hoped for the best, and went down in my trousers and braces to breakfast. My father was gone to his boiling by this time, for nothing must ever interfere with that; but my mother would never give up her breakfast, till she saw the bottom of the teapot.

"Oh, Tommy darling," she cried, as she caught me, and kissed me quite into the china-cupboard, for we always had breakfast in the kitchen, when out of a maid-of-all-work: "my own little Tommy, do you know why you fly? All the greatest men in the kingdom have been here, to prove that you do it from reasons of Herod, Heroditical something—but he was a bad man, and murdered a million of little ones. They may prove what they like; and of course they know more about my own child, than I do. I don't care that for their science," said mother, snapping her thumb, which was large and very fat; "but tell me, Tommy, from your own dear feelings, what it was that made you fly so?"

"I didn't fly, mother; I only went up, because I could not help it. Because I was so empty, and felt certain of getting full again, quite early in the holidays."

"Begin at once, darling, and don't talk. Oh, it is a cruel, cruel thing, that you should leave the ground for want of victuals, when your father clears eight pounds a week. Deny it as he may, I can prove it to him. But I have found out what makes you fly. A flip for their science, and thundering words!"

"Well, mother, I don't want to do it again;" I answered as well as I could, with my mouth quite full of good bacon, and a baker's roll; "but do please tell me what made me do it."

"Tommy, the reason is out of the Bible. You cannot help flying, just because you are an angel."

"They never told me that at school," I said; "and old Rum would have caned me, if he could reach. But he never would have dared to cane an angel."

"Hush, Tommy, hush! How dare you call that learned old gentleman, with white hair, 'old Rum'? But never mind, darling. Whatever you do, don't leave off eating."

For this I might be trusted, after all I had been through; and so well did I spend my days at home (especially when Bill Chumps came to dine with us, upon his own stipulation what the dinner was to be), that instead of going up into the air at all, the stoutest lover of his native land could not have surpassed me in sticking to it.

Chumps, though the foremost of boys, was inclined to be shy with grown-up people, till mother emboldened him with ginger-wine, and then he gave such an account of my exploit, that my father, and mother, looked at him with faces as different as could be. My mother's face was all eyes and mouth, with admiration, delight, excitement, vigorous faith, and desire for more; my father's face was all eyebrows, nose, and lips; and he shook his big head, that neighbour Chumps should have such a liar for his eldest son. Nothing but the evidence of his own eyes would ever convince Bucephalus Upmore, that a son of his, or of any other Englishman, came out of an egg; without which there was no flying.

"Mr. Upmore, you should be ashamed of yourself," my mother broke in rather sharply, "to argue such questions before young boys. But since you must edify us, out with your proof that the blessed angels were so born. Or will you deny them the power to fly?"

"Never did I claim," answered father, with a little wink at Chumps, "to know the ins and outs of angels, not having married one, as some folk do, until they discover the difference. Our Tommy is a good boy enough, in his way; but no angel, no more than his parents be. If ever I see him go up like a bubble, I'll fetch him down sharp with my clout-rake; but if I don't use my rake till then, it will last out my lifetime, I'll bet a guinea. Now, Tommy, feed, and don't talk or look about. You'll be sorry when you get back to school, for every moment that you have wasted."

"My mind is not altogether clear," said mother, "about letting him go back to the Latin Pantheon"—this was her name for the *Partheneion*; "he is welcome to have a gentle fly now and then, as Providence has so endowed him, and I am sure he would never fly away from his own mother; but as for his flying, because he is empty in his poor inside—I'll not hear of it. Bucephalus, how would you like it?"

"Can't say at all, mother, till I have tried it. Shall be glad to hear Tommy's next experience. Back he goes to-morrow morning; and by this day week, if they starve him well, he'll be fit to go sky-high again. A likely thing, indeed, that I should pay ten guineas beforehand, for a quarter's board, and tuition in classics and mathematics, all of the finest quality, and another ten guineas in lieu of notice, and get only three weeks for the whole of it! Come, Tommy, how much have you learned, my boy?"

"Oh, ever such a lot, father! I am sure I don't know what."

"Well, my son, give us a sample of it. Unless there's too much to break bulk at random. Tip us a bit of your learning, Tommy."

"Wait a bit, father, till I've got my fingers up. When they come right, I say *hic*, *hæc*, *hoc*, and the singular number of *musa*, a song. I have told mother every word of it."

"Out and out beautiful it sounds," said mother; "quite above business, and what goes on in the week. Dr. Rumbelow must be a wonderful man, to have made such great inventions."

"Well, it's very hard to pay for it, and leave it in the clouds," my father said, sniffing as if he smelled pudding. "Let's have some more of it, sky-high Tommy."

My mother looked at me, as much as to say, "Now, my dear son, astonish him"; and my conscience told me that I ought to do it; and I felt myself trying very hard indeed to think; but not a Latin word would come of it. Perhaps I might have done it, if it had not been for Chumps, who kept on putting up his mouth, to blow me some word, bigger than the one that I was after; while all that I wanted was a little one. And father leaned back, with a wink, to encourage me to take the shine out of himself, by my learning. But I could only lick my spoon.

"Come, if that is ten guineas' worth of Latin," said my father, "I should like to know what sixpenn'orth is. Tell us the Latin for sixpence, Tommy."

It was natural that I should not know this; and I doubt whether even Chumps did, for he turned away, lest I should ask him. But my mother never would have me trampled on.

"Mr. Upmore, you need not be vulgar," she said, "because you have had no advantages. Would you dare to speak so, before Latin scholars? Even Master Chumps is blushing for you; and his father a man of such fine common sense! No sensible person can doubt, for a moment, that Tommy knows a great many words of Latin, but is not to be persecuted out of them, in that very coarse manner, at dinner time. Tell me, my dear," she said, turning to me, for I was fit to cry almost, "what is the reason that you can't bring out your learning. I am sure that you have it, my chick; and there must be some very good reason for keeping it in."

"Then, I'll tell you what it is," I answered, looking at my father, more than her; "there is such a lot of it, it all sticks together."

"That's the best thing I ever heard in my life;" cried father, as soon as he could stop laughing, while Chumps was grinning wisely, with his mouth full of pudding. "What a glorious investment of my ten guineas, to have a

son so learned, that he can't produce a word of it, because it all sticks together! To-morrow, my boy, you shall go back for the rest of it. Like a lump of grains it seems to be, that you can't get into with a mashing-stick. Ah, I shall tell that joke to-night!"

"So you may," said mother, "so you may, Bucephalus; but don't let us have any more of it. 'Tis enough to make any boy hate learning, to be blamed for it, so unjustly. Would he ever have flown, if it had not been for Latin? And that shows how much he has got of it. Answer that, if you can, Mr. Upmore."

But my father was much too wise to try. "Sophy, you beat me there," he said; "I never was much of a hand at logic, as all the clever ladies are. Bill Chumps shall have a glass of wine after his pudding, and Tommy drink water like a flying fish; and you may pour me a drop from the black square bottle, as soon as you have filled my pipe, my dear."

"That I will, Bucephalus, with great pleasure; if you will promise me one little thing. If Tommy goes back to that Latin Pantheon, they must let him come home, every Sunday."

"Fly home to his nest, to prevent him from flying;" my father replied, with a smile of good humour, for he liked to see his pipe filled; "encourage his crop, and discourage his wings. 'Old Rum,' as they call him, wouldn't hear of that at first. But perhaps he will, now that he has turned out such a flyer."

CHAPTER IV.
THE PURSUIT OF SCIENCE.

Many people seem to find the world grow worse, the more they have of it; that they may be ready to go perhaps to a higher and better region. But never has this been the case with me, although I am a staunch Conservative. My settled opinion is that nature (bearing in her reticule the human atom) changes very slowly, so that boys are boys, through rolling ages; even as Adam must have been, if he had ever been a boy.

At any rate, the boys at Dr. Rumbelow's were not so much better than boys are now, as to be quoted against them. They certainly seem to have had more courage, more common-sense, and simplicity, together with less affectation, daintiness, vanity, and pretension. But, on the other hand, they were coarser, wilder, and more tyrannical, and rejoiced more freely than their sons do now, in bullying the little ones. The first thing a new boy had to settle was his exact position in the school; not in point of scholarship, or powers of the mind, but as to his accomplishments at fisticuff. His first duty was to arrange his schoolfellows in three definite classes—those who could whack him and he must abide it, those he would hit again if they hit him, and those he could whack without any danger, whenever a big fellow had whacked him. Knowledge of the world, and of nature also, was needed for making this arrangement well: to over-esteem, or to undervalue self, brought black eyes perpetual, or universal scorn.

But to me, alas, no political study of this kind was presented. All the other boys could whack me, and expostulation led to more. Because I was the smallest, and most peaceful, among all the little ones, and the buoyancy of my nature made a heavy blow impossible. Yet upon the whole, the others were exceedingly kind and good to me, rejoicing to ply me with countless nicknames, of widely various grades of wit, suggested

by my personal appearance, and the infirmity of lightness. Tom-tit, Butterfly-Upmore, Flying Tommy, and Skylark, were some of the names that I liked best, and answered to most freely; while I could not bear to be called Soap-suds, Bubbly, Blue-bottle, or Blow-me-tight. But whatever it was, it served its turn; and the boy, who had been witty at my expense, felt less disposed to knock me.

But, even as with the full-grown public, opinion once formed is loth to budge, so with these boys it was useless to argue, that having flown once, I could not again do it. If they would have allowed me simply to maintain the opposite, or to listen mutely to their proofs, it would have been all right for either side. But when they came pricking me up, with a pin in the end of a stick, or a two-pronged fork (such as used to satisfy a biped with his dinner, and a much better dinner then he gets now), endeavouring also to urge me on high, by an elevating grasp of my hair and ears, you may well believe me, when I say how sadly I lamented my exploit above. I was ready to go up, I was eager to go up; not only to satisfy public demand, but also to get out of the way of it; and more than once I did go up, some few inches, in virtue of the tugs above, and pricks in lower parts of me. But no sooner did I begin to rise, with general expectation raised, and more forks ready to go into me, than down I always came again, calling in vain for my father and mother, because I could not help it.

Upon such occasions, no one had the fairness to allow for my circumstances. Every one vowed that I could fly as well as ever, if I tried in earnest; and I was too young to argue with them, and point out the real cause; to wit the large and substantial feeding, in which I employed my Sundays. By reason of this I returned to school, every Monday morning, with a body as heavy as my mind almost; and to stir up either of them was useless, for a long time afterwards.

As ill luck would have it, it was on a Monday, that science made her next attack on me. And now let me say, that if ever you find me (from your own point of view) uncandid, bigoted, narrow-minded, unsynthetical,

unphilosophical, or anything else that is wicked and low, when it fails to square with theories,—in the spirit of fair play you must remember what a torment science has been to me.

Five of them came, on that Monday afternoon, four in a four-wheeler, and one on the dicky; and we had a boy who could see things crooked, through some peculiar cast of eye, and though the windows were six feet over his head, he told us all about it, and we knew that he was right.

Presently in came the doctor's page (a boy who was dressed like Mercury, but never allowed in the schoolroom, unless he had urgent cause to show); his name was Bob Jackson, and we had rare larks with his clothes, whenever we got hold of him—and he waved above his head, as his orders were to do, a very big letter for the doctor. Every boy of us rushed into a certainty of joy—away with books, and away to play! But woe, instead of bliss, was the order of the day. Dr. Rumbelow never allowed himself to be hurried, or flurried, by anything, except the appearance of his babies; and when he was made, as he was by and by, a Bishop, for finding out something in Lycophron, that nobody else could make head or tail of, he is said to have taken his usual leisure, in loosing the button enforced by Mrs. Rumbelow, ere ever he broke the Prime Minister's seal.

"Boys," he said now, after looking at us well, to see if anybody wanted caning, "lads who combine the discipline of Sparta with the versatile grace of Athens, Mr. Smallbones will now attend to you. Under his diligent care, you will continue your studies eagerly. In these degenerate days, hard science tramples on the arts more elegant. Happy are ye, who can yet devote your hours to the lighter muses. At the stern call of science (who has no muse, but herself is an Erinnys), I leave you in the charge of Mr. Smallbones. Icarillus, you will follow me, and bring the light cane, with the ticket No. 7. A light cane is sweeter for very little boys."

My heart went down to my heels, while bearing my fate in my hands, I followed him. Conscience had often reproached me, for not being able to fly, to please the boys. Universal consent had declared that it all was my fault, and I ought to pay out for it. What was the use of my trying to think that the world was all wrong, and myself alone right? Very great men, like Athanasius, might be able to believe it; but a poor little Tommy like me could not. But I tried hard to say to the doctor's coat-tails, "Oh, please not to do it, sir, if you can please to help it."

Dr. Rumbelow turned, as we crossed a stone passage (where my knees knocked together from the want of echo, and a cold shiver crept into my bones), and, seeing the state of my mind and body, and no boy anywhere near us, he could not help saying, "My poor Icarillus, cheer up, rouse up, *tharsei*! The Romans had no brief forms of encouragement, because they never required it. But the small and feeble progeny of this decadent country—Don't cry, brave Icarillus; don't cry, poor little fellow; none shall touch you but myself. What terror hath invaded you?"

The doctor stooped, and patted my head, which was covered with thick golden curls, and I raised my streaming eyes to him, and pointed with one hand at the cane, which was trembling in my other hand. My master indulged in some Latin quotation, or it may have been Greek for aught I know, and then translated, and amplified it, as his manner was with a junior pupil.

"Boys must weep. This has been ordained most wisely by the immortal gods, to teach them betimes the lesson needed in the human life, more often than any other erudition. But, alas for thee, poor Icaridion! it seems, as from the eyes afar, a thing unjust, and full of *thambos*. For thou hast not aimed at, nor even desired, the things that are unlawful, but rather hast been ensnared therein, by means of some necessity hard to be avoided. Therefore I say again, cheer up, Tommy! Science may vaunt herself, as being the mistress of the now happening day, and of that which has been ordained to follow; but I am the master of my own cane. Thomas Upmore, none shall smite thee."

A glow of joy came into my heart, and dried up my tears in a wink or two, for we knew him to be a true man of his word, whether to cane, or to abstain; and if the professors had kept in the background, I might have soared up for them, then and there. But it never is their nature to do that; and before I had time to be really happy, four out of the five were upon me. Hearing the doctor's fine loud voice, they could no more contain themselves, but dashed out upon us, like so many dragons, on the back of their own eminence—Professors Brachipod, and Jargoon, Chocolous, and Mullicles; than whom are none more eminent on the roll of modern science. The fifth, and greatest of them all, whose name shall never be out-rubbed by time, but cut deeper every year, Professor Megalow, sat calmly on a three-legged stool, which he had found.

None of these learned gentlemen had seen my little self before; and an earnest desire arose in my mind, that not one of them ever should see me again. Their eyes were beaming with intellect, and their arms spread out like sign-posts; and I made off at once, without waiting to think, till the doctor's deep voice stopped me.

"Icarillus," he said, and though he could not catch them, my legs could go no further, "Athena, the Muses, and Phœbus himself, command thee to face the enemy. This new, and prosaic, and uncouth power, which calls itself 'science,' as opposed to learning, wisdom, and large philosophy—excuse me, gentlemen, I am speaking in the abstract—this arrogant upstart is so rampant, because people run away from her. Tommy, come hither; these gentlemen are kind, very kind—don't be afraid, Tommy; you may stand in the folds of my gown, if you like. Answer any question they may ask, and fly again, if they can persuade you. Professors Brachipod, and Jargoon, Chocolous, and Mullicles, my little pupil is at your service."

Beginning to feel my own importance, I began to grow quite brave almost, and ventured to take down my hands from my face, and turn round a little, and peep from the corners of my eyes at these great magicians. And as soon as I saw, that the foremost of them had been

carried out of our house by father, and sent away over the cinder-heaps, there came a sort of rising in my mind, which told me to try to stick up to them. And when they fell out one with another, as they lost no time in doing, they made me think somehow about the old women who came to pick over our ash-heaps—until through the doorway I saw another face, the kindest and grandest I ever had seen, the face of Professor Megalow.

Before I had time to get afraid again, there was no chance left to run away; for the four professors had occupied all the four sides of my body. They poked me, and pulled me in every direction, and felt every tender part of me, and would have been glad to unbutton my raiment, if the master had allowed it. And they used such mighty words as nobody may reproduce correctly, unless he was born, or otherwise endowed, with a ten-chain tape at the back of his tongue. Every one talked, as fast as if the rest were listening eagerly; and every one listened, as much as if the rest had nought to say to him. For all worked different walks of science, and each was certain that the other's walk was crooked.

I assure you, that this was a very difficult thing for me to deal with, having so many tongues going on about me, and so many hands going into me, and a strong pull in one direction, crossed by a stronger push in the other. Moreover, two learned gentlemen wanted to throw me up perpendicular; while other two, of equal learning, would launch me on high horizontally. Between, and among, and amid them all, there was like to be nothing but specimens left of unfortunate Tommy Upmore.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen!" shouted Dr. Rumbelow; but they did not answer to that name. "Professors, professors, forbear, I beseech you. Is this scientific investigation? I will have no vivisection here"—for they hurt me so much, that I now screamed out—"I am sorry to lay hands upon you, but humanity compels me. Now, unless you all sit down, I shall send Argeiphontes for the police. I grieve that you drive me to such strong measures. But I cannot have my little Icarus treated like Orpheus, or Actæon."

Luckily for me the doctor's body might vie with his mind in grasp of subject; and he soon had Professors Brachipod, Jargoon, and Mullicles seated in their chairs. But the fourth professor (whose name was Chocolous, and himself a foreigner of some kind) entreated that he might not be compelled to sit.

"Not for five, six, seven year, have I seet in ze shair," he cried, with his arms spread out, and his back in a shake against some degradation; "I must not, and I will not, seet. Herr Doctor, in many languages laboriously excellent, present not to me zis grade indignity. I vill keek, if you not leave off."

He was very angry, but his friends seemed to enjoy it.

"Oblige me, gentlemen," said Dr. Rumbelow, decorously quitting this excitement, "by telling me, why your learned friend resists my kindly efforts. When the body is seated, the mind is calm. What find we in Plato upon that subject? Not only once, but even thrice, in a single dialogue, we discover, directly and inferentially——"

"A flip for those old codgers, sir!" exclaimed Professor Brachipod. "Chocolous knows more than fifty Platos, though his leading idea is fundamentally erroneous"—("I say nah, I say non, I say bosh!" broke in Professor Chocolous)—"his leading idea that the human race may recover its primordial tail, by abstaining, for only a few generations——"

"Seven chenerations, first; and when he have attained one yoint, seven more. I am ze first. But in two, tree, four hundred year, continued in ze female line, wizout ever going upon ze shair——"

"Shut up, Chocolous!" broke in Professor Mullicles. "How can molecular accretion ever be affected by human habitude? 'Tis a simple inversion of the fundamental process. Every schoolboy now is perfectly aware, that the protoplasmatic anthropomorphism was a single joint of tail. Molecular accretion immediately commenced; and the result—is such a fellow as you are."

"And such a fellow as Professor Megalow," the little German answered, with quiet self-respect; "if I vos one, he vos ze oder. Professor Megalow, vot for, you stay back so?"

"My reason for staying back so, as our learned friend expresses it," said the tall man, with the kind and noble face, at last advancing, "is that the matter now in hand, though deeply interesting, and (to judge by results) even highly exciting, is one that I have never dealt with. When I was kindly asked to come, I was very glad to do so. But with your good leave, I will form no opinion; until I find some grounds for it."

The four men of science were struck dumb, at the rashness of such a resolution; while Dr. Rumbelow took advantage of their amazement, to say a word.

"Professor Megalow, allow me the honour of shaking hands with you, sir. You speak like a genuine acolyte of that glorious sage, Pythagoras. The ereneuticon, in all truth, must precede the hermeneuticon. Whenever you like to examine Tommy, he shall be at your service."

This offer was highly disinterested; but I did not enjoy its magnanimity, especially as my protector now became so engrossed with the great professor, that he quite forgot poor little me.

"Now is your time, to go through with the question," spake the arch-enemy, Brachipod, "which, beyond all doubt, is nothing more than a case of organic levigation——"

"Levigation be d—d!" cried Professor Jargoon. "Any fool can see, that it is gaseous expansion."

"Gaseous expansion is bosh, bosh, bosh," shouted Professor Chocolous; "ze babe, zat vos born a veek longer dis day, vill tell you—bacilli, bacilli!"

"How pleasant it would be, to hear all this nonsense," declared Professor Mullicles, "if ignorance were not so dogmatic! The merest neophyte would recognise, at once, this instance of histic fluxion."

Without any delay, a great uproar arose, and the four professors rushed at me, to save rushing at one another. My heart fell so low, that I could not run away, though extremely desirous of doing so; and the utmost I could manage was to get behind a chair, and sing out for my father and mother. This only redoubled their zeal, and I might not have been alive now to speak of it, had not Professor Brachipod pulled out an implement like a butcher's steelyard, and swung back the others, with a sweep of it.

"He belongs to me. It was I who found him out. I will have the very first turn at him," he cried. "I'll knock on the head any man, who presumes to prevent me from proving my theory. Just hold him tight, while I get this steel hook firmly into his collar. Now are you satisfied? This proves everything. Can this levigation be d—d, Jargoon? All his weight is a pound and five ounces!"

He turned round in triumph, and a loud laugh met him. He was weighing my jacket, without me inside it. For mother had told me, a hundred times, that a child had much better be killed, than weighed. At the fright of his touch, I slipped out of my sleeves, and set off at the top of my speed away. In the passage, I found a side door open, and without looking back dashed through it.

"Go it, little 'un!" a cabman cried, the very man who had brought mine enemies; and go it I did, like a bird on the wing, without any knowledge of the ground below. Some of our boys, looking out of a window, called out, "Well done, Tommy! You'll win the—" something, it may have been the Derby, I went too fast to hear what it was. Short as my legs were, they flew like the spokes of a wheel that can never be counted; and I left a mail-cart, and a butcher's cart too, out of sight, though they tried to keep up with me. Such was my speed, on the wings of the wind, with my linen inflated, and my hair blown out,—the nimblest professor, that ever yet rushed to a headlong conclusion, were slow to me. In a word, I should have distanced all those enemies, had I only taken the right road home.

But alas, when I came to the top of a rise, from which I expected to see my dear parents, or at any rate our cinder-heap, there was nothing of the kind in sight. The breeze had swept me up the Barnet road; and yonder was the smoke of our chimney, like a streak, a mile away down to the left of me. All the foot of the hill, which is now panelled out into walls, and streets, of the great cattle-market, remained to be crossed, without help of the wind, ere ever I was safe inside our door. And the worst of it was, that the ground had no cover,—not a house, nor a tree, nor so much as a ditch, for a smallish boy to creep along; only piles of rubbish, here and there, and a few swampy places, where snipes sometimes pitched down, to have a taste of London.

Tired as I was, after that great run, and scant of breath, and faint-hearted—for the sun was gone down below Highgate Hill, and my spirits ever seem to sink with him—I started anew for my own sweet home, by the mark of the smoke of our boiling-house. I could hear my heart going pit-a-pat, faster than my weary feet went; for the place was as lonely as science could desire, for a snug job of vivisection. Of that grisly horror I knew not as yet the name, nor the meaning precisely; but a boy at our school, who was a surgeon's son, used to tell things, in bed, there was no sleeping after. And once he had said, "If they could catch you, Tommy, what a treat you would be, to be lectured on!"

As the dusk grew deeper in the hollow places, and the ribs of the naked hills paler, I began to get more and more afraid, and to start back, and listen at my own footstep. And before I could hear what I hoped to hear —the anvil of the blacksmith down our lane—the air began to thicken with the reeking of the earth, and the outline of everything in sight was blurred, and a very tired fellow could not tell, at any moment, what to run away from, without running into worse. At one time, I thought of sitting down, and hiding in a dip of the ground, till night came on, and my enemies could not see me; but although that might have been the safest plan, my courage would not hold out for it. So on I went, in fear and trembling, peeping, and peering, both behind me and before, and longing with all my heart to see our own door.

But instead of that, oh, what a sight I saw—the most fearful that can be imagined! From the womb of the earth, those four professors (whose names are known all over it), Brachipod, Jargoon, Chocolous, and Mullicles, came forth, and joined hands in front of me. They laughed, with a low scientific laugh, like a surgical blade on the grindstone.

"Capital, capital!" Brachipod cried; "we have got him all snug to ourselves, at last. Let me get my hook into my pretty little eel."

"Famous, famous!" said the deep voice of Jargoon; "now you shall see, how I work my compressor."

"Hoch, hoch!" chuckled Chocolous; "ve have catch ze leetle baird at last. I vill demonstrate his bacilli."

But the one that terrified me most of all was Professor Mullicles; because he said nothing, but kept one hand, upon something, that shone from his long black cloak.

"Oh, gentlemen, kind gentle gentlemen," I sobbed, dropping down on my knees before them, "do please let me go to my father, and mother. They live close by, and they think so much of me, and I am sure they would pay you, for all your inventions, a great deal more than the Government. I only flew once, and I didn't mean to fly, and I am sure it must have been a mistake altogether; and I will promise, upon my Sammy, as Bill Chumps says, not to do it any more. Oh, please to let me go! It is so late; and I beg your pardon humbly."

"Eloquent, and aerial Tommy," replied that dreadful Brachipod, "this case is too momentous, in the interests of pure science, for selfish motives to be recognized. It will be your lofty privilege, to abstract yourself, to revert to the age of unbroken continuity, when that which is now called Tommy was an atom of protobioplasm——"

"Stow that rubbish," broke in Jargoon.

"Ach, ach, ach! All my yaw is on the edge!" screamed Chocolous, dancing with his hands up.

"Proto-potatoes!" spoke Mullicles sternly, advancing to support his view of me.

"D—n," exclaimed all of them, unanimous for once, when there was no view of me to be had; "was there ever such a little devil? After him, after him! He can't get away."

"Can't he?" thought I, though I did not dare to speak, having not a single pant of breath to spare. For, while I was down on my knees for mercy, through the tears in my eyes, I had seen a lamp lit. I knew where that lamp was, and all about it, having broken the glass of it, once or twice, and lamps were a rarity in Maiden Lane as yet. It was not a quarter of a mile away, and the light of it shone upon my own white pillow.

So when those philosophers parted hands, to shake fists at one another, out of the scientific ring I slipped, and made off, for the life of me. My foes were not very swift of foot, and none of them would let another get before him; so that, if I had been fresh and bold, even without any breeze to help me, I might have outstripped them easily. But my legs were tired, and my mind dismayed; and the scientific terms, in which they called on me to stop, were enough to make any one stick fast. And the worst of it was, that having no coat on, I was very conspicuous in the dusk, and had no chance of dodging to the right or left. So that I could hear them gaining on me, and my lungs were too exhausted for me to scream out for father.

Thus, within an apple-toss of our back door, and with nothing but a down-hill slope, between me and our garden, those four ogres of grim science had me lapsing back into their grasp again. Their hands were stretched forth, in pursuit of my neck, and their breath was like flame at the tips of my ears—when a merciful Providence delivered me. I felt something quivering under my feet; over which I went lightly, with a puff of wind lifting the hollows of my hair, and shirt-sleeves. In an instant, I landed on a bank of slag; but behind me was a fearful four-fold splash!

So absorbing was my terror, and so scattered were my wits, that for ever so long I could not make out, what had happened betwixt me and my pursuers, except that I was safe, and they were not. There they were, struggling, and sputtering, and kicking—so much at least as could be seen of them—throwing up their elbows, or their heels, or heads, and execrating nature (when their mouths were clear to do it) in the very shortest language, that has ever been evolved. At the same time, a smell (even stronger than their words) arose, and grew so thick, that they could scarcely be seen through it.

This told me, at once, what had befallen them, or rather what they had fallen into,—videlicet, the cleaning of our vats, together with Mr. John Windsor's; whose refuse and scouring is run away in trucks, upon the last Saturday of every other month. It would be hard to say, what variety of stench, and of glutinous garbage, is not richly present here; and the men from the sewers, who conduct it to the pit, require brandy, at short intervals. In the pit, which is not more than five feet deep, yet ought to be shunned by trespassers, the surface is covered with chloride of lime, and other materials, employed to kill smell, by outsmelling it; and so a short crust forms over it, until the contents become firm and slab, and can be cut out, for the good of the land, when the weather is cold, and the wind blows away.

Now certain it is, that all the science they were made of, could never have extricated those professors, without the strong arms of my father, and mother, and even small me at the end of the rope. The stuff they were in, being only half cooled (and their bodies grown sticky with running so), fastened heavily on them, like tallow on a wick, closing so completely both mouth and eyes, that instead of giving, they could only receive, a lesson in materialism. Professors Brachipod, and Chocolous, being scarcely five feet and a quarter in height, were in great danger of perishing; but Mullicles, and Jargoon, most kindly gave them a jump now and then, for breath. And, to be quit of an unfragrant matter, and

tell it more rapidly than we did it,—with the aid of a blue-man from the Indigo works, and of two thickset waggoners, we rescued those four gentlemen from their sad situation, and condoled with them.

Not for £5 per head, however, would any of our cabmen take them home; though a man out of work had been tempted by a guinea, to relieve them a little, with a long-handled broom, and to flush them with a bucket, afterwards. Under heavy discouragement, they set forth on their several ways, surveyed by the police at a respectful distance, on account of the danger to the public health.

CHAPTER V.
"GRIP."

My mother was so frightened, at the fright I had been through, that she took it for an urgent sign from Heaven, that my education should be stopped at once. Having had as much of school as I desired, I heartily hoped, that her opinion would prevail; but father was as obstinate as ever, and after the usual argument—in which she had the best of the words perhaps, and he of the meaning—I was bound to the altar of the Muses once again, with a promise of stripes, if I should try to slip the cord. Dr. Rumbelow undertook, that no professor of anything harder than languages—unless it were Professor Megalow—should come in, at any door of the *Partheneion*, without having tallow poured over him, which he had found, from high Greek authority, to be the right ointment for Neo-sophistæ. And he said that my father must have been familiar with the passage he referred to, and had thus discomfited all the Pansophistæ, better than any modern Deipnosophist could have done. But my father said no; he had never even heard of the gentleman, with the hard name to crack; and as for them Prophesiers, they ought to have prophesied what his clots was, before tumbling into them. He ought to have an action of trespass against them; and, but for the law, he would do so.

To make it quite certain, that no man of science should analyse, synthesise, generalise, or in any way scientise me, I was now provided with a guardian, intrepid of neologisms ten yards long. The father of our Bill Chumps, Mr. Chumps, the Purveyor of Meat, was the owner of a dog, who was the father of a pup, who was threatening, every day, to make mincemeat of the author of his existence. The old dog might have tackled him, Bill told me, or at any rate could have shown a good turn-up, but for having broken his best fighting-tooth, on the spiked collar of the last mastiff he had slain. Through this disability on the part of old *Fangs*, he

found his son *Grip* too many for him; yet could not be brought to confess it, and abstain from a battle, at every opportunity. These encounters in no wise disturbed Mr. Chumps, but became inconvenient to Mrs. Chumps, when she heard the piano (which had cost £10, for her daughter, Belinda, to learn her scales) upset, and entirely demolished. If it had been possible to hang *Grip*, hanged he would have been that very day; for the mistress had nursed *Fangs* through his distemper, and never would listen to a word against him. Whereas the whole fault was upon the side of *Fangs*; of which I am quite certain, from the character of *Grip*, as it unfolded itself before me, when he became my own dear dog.

Providentially, their attempt to hang him had proved a miserable failure. Not that he resisted—he was too docile, and kind, and intelligent, to do that—but because his neck was much too thick, and manifold, and his wind too good, for any rope to be of much account to him. And before they could try any other form of murder, his master came home, and made short work with them, knowing the superiority of the dog. Now, that same evening, the day being Monday, the very choice club, to which he, and my father, and Mr. John Windsor belonged, as well as the largest potato-man at King's Cross, and the owner of the Indigo-blue concern, and the most eminent merchant in the cat's meat line, and several other gentlemen of equal distinction, held their bi-daily congress at "*The Best End of the Scrag*," at the corner.

That night there was a very fine attendance; and my father, who had long been acknowledged to be the wittiest man on our side of the road—perhaps because he got no chance at home, to say what came inside him—upon this occasion was compelled, by the nature of some of the smells he had gone through, to be at his best, as he generally was, after not less than two glasses and a half. And he told the adventure, of the four professors, not as a sad and deplorable thing, but rather as matter for merriment. In such a light did he put it, that all the gentlemen laughed heartily, most of all Mr. John Windsor, who knew, even better than my father did, the variety of organic substance, active in that pit just then.

"There's things there," he said, "to my living knowledge, that'll never come out of their hair while they live. And those big Savage-Johns always have long hair, and as fuzzy as a cat stroked upward. Why, the very last Friday, when I was a-cooling, a pair of them comes with a brazen machine, and asked me, as quiet as a statue, permission for to taste my follet oils. I up with the wooden spoon, and offered them a drop; but that was not their meaning. It was som'at about som'at we gives off, according to them philanderers. And I says—'Government inquiry, gents?' And they says—'No, sir; but for purposes of science.' 'Tell me,' says I, 'what the constitootion is of this here clot,' and they said 'Composite organic' something; while my composites all was upon the upper floor, and never a hurdy-gurdy allowed inside. 'So much for science!' says I; 'Jim, show these gentlemen out, by the back-alley door.' And now that you come to discourse of it, Bubbly, it strikes me they might have come very likely, smelling up a side-wind for your poor Tommy."

"I should hope they have had enough of that," said father; "if they come any more, I'll boil them down, and make 'Science-sauce for the million,' How would you like, John, to pay your money, and get no change out of it, along of such a lot?"

"You mean the missus," Mr. Windsor asked—"won't allow Thistledown, as my Jack calls him, to go to old Rum's any more, I suppose? Afraid of the ladies, Mr. Upmore is."

"I'll tell you what to do," Mr. Chumps broke in; "Upmore, you buy my young dog *Grip*. I'd give him to you with all my heart, if it wasn't for the bad luck of it; though he is worth ten guineas of anybody's money, for he comes of the best blood in England. Downright House of Lords bull-dog he is; same as should be chained to the pillars of the State, to keep them Glads, and Rads, away. Just you put him in charge of Thistledown—or whatever you call that little yellow-haired chap, and I'll back *Grip* against all the Science, that ever made a pint contain a pot."

"What's the figure?" my father asked, knowing how generously all men talk, and that Mr. Chumps' bull-dogs were a fashionable race.

"If you was to offer me more than a crown," replied Mr. Chumps, with his fist on the table; "I should say, 'Bubbly, he's no dog of yours, because you desire to insult me.' But put you down a crown, as between old friends, and before this honourable company, I say, 'Bucephalus Upmore, *Grip* is your dog.' Why so? John Windsor here knows why, and so does Harry Peelings from King's Cross, and so does Bill Blewitt, and Sandy Mewliver, and all this honourable company. And so do you, Bubbly Upmore, if you are the man I have taken you for. Gentlemen, it is because Mr. Upmore has told the best story I have sat and listened to, ever since last election day; he digged a pit for his enemies in the gate, and they fell into it themselves; as well as because my son, Bill Chumps, who will make his mark, mind you, if you live to see it, has taken a liking to this gentleman's son—Thistledown, or Bubble-blow, or Up-goes-the-donkey—they've got at least fifty names for him—and, in my humble opinion, he must be protected from the outrages of all those fellows, philo-this, and anti-that,—my son Bill knows their names, and all about them—who have made the world a deal too clever for a quiet man's comfort."

These very simple and sensible words were received with much knocking on the table; and my father put down his five-shilling piece, so that all the other gentlemen had time to see it, before they began talking, as the subject compelled them to do, of the merits of their children, respectively, severally, and all together. And they parted, in thorough good will, inasmuch as not anybody listened to anybody else.

My father's opinion, at the time, had been that the warmth of Mr. Chumps' political and social feelings (promoted by the comforts of the club) had hurried him into a disregard of money, which his friends should never lose a moment to improve. But when the journeyman came over in the morning, on his way to the *Partheneion*, with *Grip* trotting chained at the tail of the cart, my father cried—

"What! Has Chumps no more conscience, than to impose upon a friend like this? I, who have known him all these years, to pay as good a crown-piece as was ever coined, for a one-eyed, nick-eared, hare-lipped, broken-tailed son of a [female dog] like that! Gristles, you go back, and tell your master, that you saw me put an ounce of lead through him."

My father strode in, to fetch his gun, which he kept well-charged in the clock-case now, for the sake of so many Professors; and *Grip*, for a surety, would have been dead, and boiling, in less than five minutes, except for his luck. His luck was that I, being under debate between my two parents, had slipped out of doors, being old enough now by experience to know, that they took the kindest view of me, when I was out of sight. And coming round the corner, to peep in at the window, just to see whether they had settled my concerns, there I saw this poor dog—hideous they might call him—doubtfully glancing in every direction, dimly aware that the world was against him, scenting the death of a dog in the air. One of his eyes was out of sight, and one of his ears was in need of a sling, his tail (which had lately been cracked by his father) hung limp in the dust with a pitiable wag, and every hair on his body was turned the wrong way. His self-respect had suffered a tremendous blow, by the effort of mankind to hang him yesterday, and by dragging at the tail of a cart to-day; and as sure as dogs are dogs, he was aware of the awful decision against him.

Gristles was a hard man, and would not say a word, to comfort or to plead for him, having got a little snap from him, a month or two ago; so he looked down over the back of the cart, and whistled—"Pop goes the Weasel"—while the poor dog implored him, with all his one eye full of wistful enquiry, what harm he had done.

"All right, guv'nor," shouted Gristles, as my father came forthwith his big double-barrel; "my mare will stand fire like a church. But mind you, it ain't no good to shoot at his head, with nothing no smaller than a dockyard cannon. Have at his heart, where you sees him now a-panting; but for God's sake, guv'nor, don't shoot me."

That fellow's cowardly cruelty made my father relent, for his heart was kind; and before he could put up his gun again, I was lying upon *Grip*, and hugging him. The unfortunate dog, for his last resource, had appealed to the only weak face he could find, and my own fright enabled me to enter into his.

"You little fool, Tommy, get out of the way," my father shouted; but I would not budge, and *Grip* put his quivering tongue out, and licked my cheek, and besought me with a little speech of whine.

"Very well," said my father, being glad of an excuse for a milder course, as his wrath went down, and knowing that, if he did this thing, Mr. Chumps would never look at him again, which would cost him as much as £20 a year; "very well, Tommy, if you like the brute you shall have him, and I hope he will be grateful to you. Gristles, here's half-a-crown for you, and you need not tell your master what I said—only that I seemed a little disappointed with the first appearance of the dog; which is rather a good fault, you know, in a dog who has got to keep off strangers; and my compliments, and I begin to feel sure that *Grip* will soon begin to grow upon us."

This prophecy was fulfilled right well, so far as my mother and self were concerned, and even my father grew fond of *Grip*, as soon as he found what a wonder he was; but the dog, while regarding him with deep respect, could never forgive his own narrow escape, any more than forget my timely aid; for his memory was as tenacious as his teeth. On me the dog fastened his strong heart at once, with an attachment more than dogged, making the best of whatever I did, expecting no credit for his own good works, humbly and heartily wagging his tail, for the mere hope of a kind word, or look.

And, after a little while, no one who knew him—at least if he were any judge of a dog—could consider him ugly, from a proper point of view, and without any personal feeling. For his eye, that had seemed to be gone, came back, so as nearly to agree with the other one, yet working enough, on its own account, to redouble his power of expression; while

his tail (being oiled and done up with bell-wire) returned to its natural tendency; and as for his ear of a gingery yellow, the colour was so rich that it wanted shading, and gained it by having a division introduced. So that, on the whole, he had succeeded, without any serious damage to himself, in impressing the main principle of the present age—that of parental submission to the child.

Now, when I appeared at the *Partheneion*, under convoy of this gallant animal, Dr. Rumbelow scarcely knew what to do. After looking at *Grip*, with some surprise, he fired a strong volley of quotations at him; but the dog moved never a tail-point for them, and instead of being frightened, he would not even blink, but gazed at them calmly; as much as to say, "There is not a pinch of shot in the whole of them."

The Doctor, though one of the bravest of mankind, could not return his gaze, with equal largeness and frank placidity of criticism, but shouted for Mercury, his page, and bade him remember the glorious day whereon he slew the monster Argus. Bob Jackson, failing to recall that date, looked as if he would rather keep aloof from *Grip*, who opened his nostrils, and curled up his lips, and shot fire out of his discordant eyes.

"Good doggie, good doggie,—poor fellow"—said the page, in a tenderly condescending tone, while approaching sideways gingerly; "if he is a very good doggie, he shall have this beautiful collar to wear,—oh lor!"

He was lying on his back, with *Grip* standing across him, but scarcely thinking it worth while to bite him, unless he should endeavour to make escape. "Fetch me the big cane, labelled No. 1," the Doctor shouted valiantly, "the father of all canes, the *rhopalos*, which has warmed the back of a prime-minister. With that will I rescue my Hermes, though the Hydra herself stand over him."

"No, sir; no, sir; for God's sake don't go near him," cried Bill Chumps, running up the playground; "*Grip* can beat any two men in the world, because no blow can hurt him. Leave him to me, sir; I understand him,

and he knows me well enough, though he never took to me, somehow or other, as his dear old father does. He has taken wonderfully to Fly Tommy. Somebody come, and give Tommy a good whack."

Of the many brave boys, who had rejoiced in doing this, even without instigation last week, there was not one who would now discharge this duty, for the public weal. "Why should I hit him?" said boy after boy, who said last week, "Why shouldn't I?"—"I am a deal too fond of poor Tommy for that. Hit him yourself, if you want him hit."

"So I will, then, you pack of dirty cowards," answered Chumps, being put upon his mettle, though he told me afterwards that he was in a horrid funk; and he gave me at once a good sounding smack, on a part of my body that was covered with material warranted to wear, and having three stout seams with a piece to let out. Before the echo of the Five's court ceased, *Grip* was between us, looking up at me, as if to ask, "What am I to do?" doubting in his mind whether justice would allow him to wage war against his late master's son.

"Worthy is he to be piled with praise—not *cumulari*, but *qui cumuletur*, boys of the second form observe—inasmuch as he has not doubted to encounter, singly, or in maniple, all the foes of the pusill committed to his charge. Great is the manhood of this dog; and yet it somewhat repenteth me that, provoked by the wanton assaults of science upon the sweet retirement of the Muses, I have promised him the tub, and the collar, and the bowl, of the deceased, and perhaps now constellated animal, Heracles Poikilostiktos. Mercury, brush thy pulverulent *petasus*, and with the aid of thy lyre, or that of the ever ready-minded Chumps, conduct this formidable animal to the many-strewn couch prepared for him. *Partheneionidæ*, the hour has struck. With grateful ardour, let us hasten to the banquet of the mind provided for us, by the generous wisdom of the men of old."

With these words, our great master strode to the school-room door; and we (his children and the fruit of his cane) looked vainly for chance of escape from work. Then, with as much of a sigh as childhood yet has

learned from nature's book, we followed the learned steps afar, with two for one in length, but only one for two in speed, I ween.

CHAPTER VI.
TRUE SCIENCE.

For some years now, I had a quiet time, increasing in knowledge very gradually, but as fast as my teachers thought needful. For the only true way to get on in learning, is not to be in too much of a hurry, counting every step, and losing breath, and panting into violence of perspiration; but rather to take, as the will of the Lord, whatever gets carried into us, allowing it to settle, and breed inside, with the help of imagination. Under the steadfast care of *Grip*, and furtherance of Dr. Rumbelow, I advanced pretty fairly in fine acquirements, which have proved, once or twice, to be serviceable.

To me, and to all the school, and indeed a considerable number of the houses around, it was a sad and bitter day, when William Chumps, Esquire—for that was his proper style now, under stamp (as he showed us) of several letters—was at last compelled to say farewell to the *Partheneion*, and the whole of us. He had been elected to a scholarship, founded for that purpose by his father at the *Partheneion*, to the amount of five shillings a week for three years, as a tribute to humane letters, and the many good contracts for meat Mr. Chumps had performed. And Bill was to take it to Oxford, and perhaps when the "Chumps Scholarship" became talked about, obtain some good orders to supply his college; for a great deal of meat is consumed in Hall.

"Tommy," said Bill, the very day he was to leave, when he saw me crying about his departure, for he always had been so good to me, "keep up your spirits, young fellow, and don't blub. The fault of your nature is, being so soft. Now, why am I going to the grandest old place, and the finest young fellows, on the face of the earth? Simply because I have got so much pluck. I am not such a wonderfully clever cove, though everybody seems to think so; and I have plenty to learn yet, I can assure

you. And of course I know well enough, that I am going among big swells, who have a right to be swells, not snobs from the Poultry, and Mincing Lane, such as used to try to snub me here. But do you think I have a particle of funk? Feel the muscle in my arm, Tommy."

"Bill," I replied, "you could knock them all down; but when you had done it, there would be fifty more."

"Tommy, my boy, I will not hurt one of them, unless he endeavours to cock over me. If it comes to any fighting, at my time of life, it must be done with pistols. But my mind is made up, not to meddle with any man, unless he insults me, and then let him look out. They will very soon discover that I mean to be a gentleman, although my father may be called a butcher; and when they see that, if they are gentlemen themselves, they will be very glad to show me the way. The great defect of your character, Tommy, is that you have not got go enough."

"I should think I have heard enough of that," I said; "just because I don't want to fly, to please you chaps that cock over me."

"You are putting the cart before the horse," replied Chumps, having taken already six lessons in logic, from a man who came on purpose; "you have an extraordinary gift of flying, which would make your fortune, Tommy, and enable your father to leave off poisoning the public, if only you would cultivate it. I can do very good Latin Elegiacs, and tidy Greek Iambics, and run a mile in four minutes and three-quarters; but how many years might I hammer at all that, and scarcely turn a sixpence? But you—you have only to put on your wings, and astonish all the North of London. If I had only got your turn for flying, with my own for the classics, and for going to the top, I tell you what it is, Tommy Upmore—in ten years I'd be the Prime Minister of England."

My own opinion was, that without any flying, Bill would arrive at the top of the tree, in about five years, which was a long time yet for any one to look forward to; and thinking so much of him now, and grieving so deeply for the loss of him, I allowed his words to sink into my mind, as

they never had done before. Hitherto I had been inclined to think, if ever I thought about it, that my want of proper adhesion to the ground was a plague to me, and no benefit. My father treated it as a thing to laugh at, and to disbelieve in; my mother was afraid that I never might come down, within her reach, and the same as I went up; while the rest of the world was content to take it entirely from a selfish point of view, as a question of science, or of low curiosity.

But before we could say any more about that, "old Rum," as we called him, came into the hall, where Chumps was waiting with his boxes, for his father's meat-van to fetch them. The doctor had already said farewell to Bill, before all the school, and as a public essay; but now he came to say good-bye, and to give him a few kind words, with a friendly heart. Bill was as tall as his master now, being an exceedingly strapping fellow, and thoroughly thriven on the marrow of the ox; but when the Doctor took his hand, and spoke to him in a low, soft voice, without any Latin turn in it, the cup of Bill's feelings began to run over, and I ran away, not to look at it.

Here in a passage, as facts would have it, with my eyes full of tears and shadow, I ran into the arms, or legs, of a strong, hard man. Hard in the matter of bones, I mean, and the absence of any fat about him, but as soft and tender in heart, and vein, as anything he had ever dissected.

"Why, Tommy! It is indeed our Tommy!" exclaimed Professor Megalow. "Prolepsis of our race, what trouble is upon you?"

"Oh, sir," cried I, "if you could only stop Bill Chumps from going away from us! The place will be nothing, after he is gone, and nobody will want to stop here. Whatever you order is sure to be done."

"Well," said the Professor, as he lifted me up, and looked at me kindly with his large, calm eyes, "I have come a long way to make that discovery; and I wish it were so in Great Russell Street."

He was thinking of his labours, and forgetting a far more important matter in our eyes—the two half-holidays procured for us, when he thought that we seemed to require them. For now his vast knowledge, and accuracy, simplicity, gentleness, and playful humour, had won the warm friendship of our Dr. Rumbelow, who seldom caned any of us now, except for lying. For my part, I loved this kind gentleman, and grieved that he had not once asked me to fly for him.

"My friend, you are often in my thoughts," he said, as if he knew all that was passing in my mind; "let us sit down a while in this quiet corner, and consider a highly scientific case, which happens to be in my pocket."

Smiling at the fright his words had caused, he drew forth a pretty little globular box, yellow, pellucid, and inlaid with stars of gold; and this he held so that the light of the sun glanced through it, illuminating things inside, that danced with colour, purple, and orange, and rosy red. I pulled out my handkerchief, and dried my eyes, and pushed back my curls, for a hearty good stare.

"Tommy, your mind is of a wholesome type," said the great Professor pleasantly; "brief should be the pangs of youthful woe. And they are all good to eat, Tommy; and as you suck them, you can pull them out of your mouth, and see the sun shine through, and then put them back, and find them ever so much sweeter."

"Oh, but I can't get at them, sir! What good can they be, if I can't get at them?"

"Your reasoning is wonderfully sound and good, from its own point of view," he answered. "But get at them, Tommy, and they shall be yours; you shall have box and all, if you open it."

This was very hard upon me; for I had no more chance of opening it, than of flying in the air, as people say, and indeed, according to my gifts, much less. In vain I pulled, and squeezed, and pressed, examined every part of it, and then worked away again, screwing up my lips, and eyes, so sternly that the Professor could not help laughing. And the worst of it

was, that the more I laboured, the greater the temptation of the inside grew, everything dancing with a play of colours glorious to see, and feel that all was good to eat.

"Oh, sir, I can't, I can't get at them; do please to show me the way, sir," I cried; for truly it was enough to make me cry.

"My boy," said the Professor, looking gravely at me, and seeming to wink with one large clear eye, though it was not a wink, but rather the effect of a most sagacious and delightful nod; "I have long anticipated that result. It is always agreeable to find one's prognosis confirmed by events, though they often fail to do it. No one has found out the secret of this box, though very clever men have striven at it, and among them three noted puzzle-makers. Perfect simplicity is deeper than any depth of complexity. Tommy, behold, and with good will devour. Ha, a practical, rather than a theoretic mind!"

Perhaps he made that observation because, without stopping to ask how the box came open, I fell to at once upon its choice contents. The flavour was altogether new to me, and wonderfully fine and penetrating, leaving no part of the mouth in idleness, and warming the entire length of throat with hope. At the same time, these goodies had just enough about them of roughness, to compel the tongue to stop, and invite it to dwell upon their surface gently, equably, earnestly, and with much delight refraining from speech, while thus better employed.

"Ah!" said the Professor, and one "ah" of his contained all the fulness of three volumes; "Tommy, be just, and consider them fairly. They are made from my own design, and stamped with cuneiform—ah, I see it now! The young mind is plagued so with ancient tongues, that the young tongue rejoices in demolishing their symbols. By taking a patent for this design, I might get on better than by building dragons. But let us return to our point, my good Tommy."

As he spoke, he was setting against one another the tips of his long middle fingers, which I took for the point to be returned to, and said, "Yes, sir, if you please, sir."

"My young friend, I take it that the point, from which we have allowed our minds to be pleasantly diverted, is whether you will allow me just to give you a lift in the air—a very gentle lift; not for any scientific view whatever, but only for a little satisfaction to myself. If from old experience of professors, you have any misgiving, say so, Tommy, and I will not touch you."

"Oh, sir," said I, with my mouth running over; "don't be afraid, sir, to lift me where you like."

At this good encouragement. Professor Megalow nodded, as if in pleasant commune with himself; and then with one hand softly tossed me to his shoulder, where I sate very nicely, as on a spring-cushion, rather than a feather-bed, however. Then he handed me up the box, which I put between my knees, and began to sing, according to my habit, when contented with the world.

"Ah," said the Professor, as he walked about (having, now and then, a little whistle to himself), and took me to look at a map of mountains (placed at a mountainous height above my usual level of intelligence), "Tommy, this is very good; this is quite delightful. Do you know, why this is so delightful, little Tommy?"

"Yes, sir," I replied, for I was very clever then; "it is jolly, because they are so capital to suck."

"Not only that, Tommy; although I am perfectly open to conviction upon that point"—here he opened his mouth, and I popped a goody in, as if he were the boy, and I the celebrated man—"but also because, my most generous young friend, it confirms my opinion, or, in finer words, my theory. Most of us, as we get older and older, grow more and more

interested in ourselves. Possibly you are too young, small Tommy, to have any desire as yet to hear an empirical, rather than a scientific opinion, about your peculiar, but not altogether unparalleled, case."

"If you please, sir, to say anything you like. And I won't be afraid, and I won't tell my mother, unless you are sure that you would not be afraid. And if you talk as plainly as you did just now, I will try to make out what the meaning is."

Professor Megalow put me down, with a gentle clap on my back, as if he had found me one too much for him. And then, with a jerk of his prominent chin, and a rub of his nose, he considered me.

And while he was doing all this, such a smile of large good-will illumined us, that I would have been glad to be dissected, if it would please him, and not hurt much.

The only thing that saddened me was this—he did not appear to be at all astonished, by anything discovered in me. And I now called to mind, that he never had shown any special excitement about my case, as all the other scientific men had done. And my mother had said that he could not be half so clever as his reputation was, because of his letting me alone so. Though perhaps he was paid by the year for his work, and the others by the job; which would account for everything. That may have been so, and I thought about it now, and concluded (from brief observation of his hat) that he only got his money at the end of the year.

"The difference," said the Professor calmly, with a glance of affection at his large-skulled hat, which was rolling on the floor without taking any harm, "according to my very humble opinion, is not so much of kind as of degree, my Tommy. It has long been well known that the various families of the human race—as we may venture still to call it—differ very greatly in specific gravity; the Celt, for instance, is especially heavy in proportion to his size, and the Jute the opposite. There was, I believe, an exceptionally light and buoyant race in North America, aboriginal so far as we know; and the lightest member of that race, Tommy, would

probably have despised your highest flight. At the same time, and although I have met with a case of almost equal levity—the example being, I regret to say, feminine—you must not imagine that I am endeavouring to disparage your exploits, my dear Tommy. Don't cry, my dear child; I had no idea that you were so sensitive upon this matter. Your admirable master has always told me, that your main desire is to stop upon the ground, and that both your parents wish it. You nod your head, as if I understood your feelings. Then why are your blue eyes full of tears?"

"If you please, sir, I wasn't at all longing to go up. Only I didn't know anybody else had done it. And I shan't care to go up any more, after that."

"Well!" cried the Professor, with his great rich smile; "human nature has no exceptions half so wonderful as its laws are. My good little friend, allow me to comfort you, and to restore your self-respect. It is not by any means a common thing for members of the English race to fly—excuse me for using the popular, but incorrect word, to describe your exploits. But there is a power that beats you, Tommy, in your own province, and that is Time. At three o'clock I have a lecture to deliver upon your antitype, the apteryx, a bird that has abdicated the rights, which some of us desire to usurp."

"Oh, sir, do let me come and hear it, if old Rum will let me go. Bill Chumps has heard you lecture, and he says——"

"I thank him heartily for his approval;" replied the Professor, at the same time showing me his watch, which ticked with a bullet upon cat-gut; "William Chumps is a fine young man, with a great spirit in a strong body; and I would ask your kind master to let you come, if I thought the subject good for you. But, my dear little fellow, I am sure that it is not so. The less your mind runs upon the regions of the air, and the more you endeavour to bring your body, by good feeding, exercise, pleasant sports, and moderate labours, to the normal specific gravity, the better it will be for yourself, and your parents, whose only child you are. And I venture

to differ from my learned brethren, Professors Brachipod, and Jargoon, Chocolous, and Mullicles, in thinking that it will be no worse for the interests of science. Good-bye, Tommy; you may keep the box, as a souvenir of this long interview; be sure that you eat all you can of good meat, solid bread, and glutinous material; and don't swallow too much Latin and Greek, which tend to undue elation. If you were a lazy boy, I should not tell you this; but I hear that you are an ambitious boy, and eager to learn everything. I shall observe you, my interesting friend, and from time to time hint to your learned master any trifle that escapes the unmedical mind."

He lifted me up, and kissed my forehead; and as I picked up his hat—a trifle which had escaped his universal mind—and by jumping on a chair clapped it on his mighty head, I could not help paying him the usual tribute paid at his departure—glistening eyes, that is to say, and a smile of loving wonder.

CHAPTER VII.
THE GREAT WASHED.

My father, Bucephalus Upmore, had been, at the time of my birth, a Radical, and owed his conversion from loose ideas to no amount of argument, or even of wider observation, but to a little accident. Upon his return, one winter night, from a meeting in St. Pancras, not only of a liberal, but a wildly generous character, somebody tripped him up, and stole his watch, and purse, and Sunday hat. A small man might have accepted this as a lesson against subversive views, and a smaller one as a confirmation of them; but my father was not of that sort. His practice was, to take his stand upon what he considered right, and allow no evidence to move him one hair's breadth from the true conclusions poured into him. And he never read anything, that did not cap and sawder down his own contents.

This had made his life thus far most happy, enabling him to despise all people who differed in any way from him, as well as to enlarge himself, without any compulsion to pay for it. And he might have gone on in this easy way, calling upon the people behind him to rob the people in front of him, if he had not undergone the bad luck to be robbed himself. When he came to speak of this, among his friends, not one of them failed to express deep sorrow, and to assure him that such things must happen, whenever the Conservatives were in office. At the same time they intimated gently, that when he made so much money out of working men, it served him right to lose some of it.

His feelings were hurt by this sometimes; especially when the suggestion came from gentlemen, who had attained that degree, by adulterating the victuals of the working man. However, he smothered his common sense, as the first duty is of Liberals; till his body and mind came thump upon a stumbling-block, and no mistake.

Arising in a vast hall of Reform, to second a motion that all men are equal, and must have the same money for their work (whether they do it, or leave it undone), and must not do more than six hours in a day—for fear of imparting infection to the rest—with his mouth full of reason, and his heart full of hope [that none of his men might be there to hear him], my dear father gave a stamp, and found it fall upon something soft and dull. He felt himself more at home through this, having so much soft stuff round his vats, and his eloquence mounted to full swell, till he wanted to jump to give emphasis. This he attempted to do with a clap of his hands, to complete a grand sentence, when up came something between his legs, and got stuck on the top of his highlows. With laudable agility, my father stooped, while the audience cheered lustily, supposing him to be in quest of some word big enough to express his sentiments.

These, however, demanded outlet, in a very short one, when he found in his hand his own lost hat, with a hole in the brim from the stamp of his heel, and the crown chock-full of heads for speech, and demolitionist statistics. He examined his hat, and descried B. U. just in under the tuck of the lining, where a Liberal always puts his mark, on the Vote-by-ballot principle.

This alone was enough to shake his confidence in his party; though all the gentlemen around him looked quite incapable of doing anything. And he might, as he said to my mother, have believed that his old hat had come down from heaven, if only his new hat, bought last Friday, had been left for him to go home with. That, however, was not the case; his new hat managed to leave that great assembly upon the head of some eminent Liberal; and my father went home with his old hat on, greasy, and dirty, and showing signs of conflict, but containing a head that would be Radical no more.

Now, I need not have told that little story—which repeats itself among such people, more often than it is repeated—except to explain what it was that took us, in the summer holidays, to a place called "Happystowe-on-Sea."

It appears that my father was by no means satisfied so to lose his hats—though in truth it was no great grievance, thus to save the contents at the cost of the case—and like a thorough Briton, as he always was, he determined not to get the worst of it. Several opportunities for reprisal had been allowed to escape him; when, soon after Bill Chumps went to Oxford, there came among us, and excited our principles, a contested election for Marylebone. By means of their noble organization, the Liberals knew, from the outset, that the battle of freedom was sure to be won; or, as our people put it, rank bribery and corruption, truckling and swilling would defeat the right. Nevertheless, a just hope was entertained, on both sides, of a very lively contest, and a fair occasion (without legal intervention) for sounding the capacity of an adversary's head. My father was flying a big blue flag, which we could see from the *Partheneion*, with "Church and State for ever" on it; and Mr. John Windsor, and Chumps Esquire—as we called the great butcher in respect of his son—and "*The Best End of the Scrag*," all had the same; and only a man who knocked horses on the head durst hang out the red rag, up our Lane.

I speak of this, only as a circumstance to prove that our neighbourhood was Constitutional, and that the Radical element, however respectable it might have been when kept at home, had no right whatever to come invading us, and desiring to trample on our principles. They knew that for nearly three hundred and fifty yards, the inhabitants were all true-Blue, beginning with the Indigo factory on the South, and going all through the ash-heaps, and ending with my father. But in the wantonness of triumph, when their majority was posted up 2,000 [though our side claimed 1,500 in front] these "Demi-Cats"—as Bill had sent us word from Oxford to entitle them, and so we did—must needs assemble at King's Cross, in their thousands, and resolve to storm every Blue house in Maiden Lane.

The beginning of their enterprise was most glorious; nothing could stand before them. They broke all the glass that had a blue flag near it, and they knocked down every man who had got blue eyes. The premises of

Mr. Chumps were sacked; his legs of mutton walked off, as if they were alive, and his salt beef was stuck on poles, even bigger than the skewers he weighed it out with; every drop in the cellars of the Conservative Hotel ran uphill inside a big Radical, and Mr. John Windsor lost soap enough pretty nearly to clean half the Liberals. However, he contrived to get over a back wall, together with his wife and daughter Polly—Jack was luckily at the *Partheneion*, and the other four gone to see their Aunt, with old *Fangs* to protect them from the Liberals—and by taking an in-and-out way through the cinders, the three arrived safely at our back door, without breath enough to blow out one of their own dips.

Till now my father had scarcely struck a blow on behalf of the Constitution, beyond giving his vote, and knocking down a man who was anxious to do the like to him; but now it did seem a bit too hard that the Liberals should extinguish thus all liberty of opinion.

"John," he said now, as he brought in the fugitives, and heard a tremendous noise coming up the Lane, "this is what I call coming it too strong. Mrs. Windsor, ma'am, you are all of a tremble. Sophy, get whiskey and water, at once."

"Bubbly," poor Mr. Windsor gasped, "this is most kind, and cordial of you. My dear, you require a stimulant, however much you dislike it. But, Upmore, down with your flag, at once! Down with your flag, that the fellows may go by."

"Oh yes, Mr. Upmore," implored Mrs. Windsor, a lady of a most superior kind; "please not to lose a moment in hauling down your flag; it is flying in the face of Providence. Do cut the ropes, if it won't untie."

"Will I?" said my father, and his face took on, as my mother said afterwards, a very fine expression; "lower my flag, to the scum of the earth! Ladies, go down to the cellar, and keep quiet. You will have no one here, while my flag is flying. Mr. Windsor is a man of high spirit, as he has proved many times, in our debates. He, and I, will go to the boiling-house, and defend the true-blue, come what will."

My mother declares that Mr. Windsor was going, at his best pace, to the cellar-stairs, when she locked him out, and pulled out the key; but mother was always severe upon him, because of his wholesale ways, and talk. At any rate, he did not flag or fly, although he may have longed to do so perhaps.

"Now, John," said my father, as he took his arm, to confirm his courage (which required it), and led him down the red-tiled passage to the boiling-house; "you have had a great many good laughs at my little steam-engine, haven't you? Very well, we'll try it on the 'Great unwashed;' if there happens to be a bit of fire left. My men are all away, the same as yours—or else these fellows would not come to sack us. I gave them the quarter-day to vote, the same as you did with yours; and mine are gone the right colour to a man, I do believe. But I happened to say, 'leave a little steam on;' and I can get up a great deal in ten minutes, and the blackguards won't be here for twenty. They've got three blue houses yet to wreck, and my double-gates will keep them out, at least five minutes."

"I see, I see, what you mean to do. What a glorious fellow you are, Bubbly! I'll go half the waste of phleg."

"Then go and see that all the bolts are right, while I get up steam, and have the double hose ready."

These two gallant, and sturdy, boilers very soon had the front and back gates barred and bolted, and strengthened with struts against the styles; so that all the men who could get at them must take at least five minutes to get through them; and meanwhile the furnace of the little engine was beginning to roar, and the steam to puff.

"Capital! I call this first-rate stoking;" exclaimed my father, as he stopped to breathe. "Now you understand the hose, John? It is only three-inch pipe, and therefore as handy as a walking-stick. You put your

nozzle upon that trestle, commanding the back doors, while I keep ready for the time they have broken the front gate down. We have got a big vat of hot stuff to draw from; but I don't think they'll want half of it."

"Bubbly, I don't seem to understand it," said Mr. Windsor, who was slow-headed, and losing his presence of mind, perhaps (although he had got his coat off) from working so hard while he was fat, and with terrible Liberal screeches already arising in the air, above the rattle of the gates; "suppose, my dear friend, that we killed some fellow!"

"No hope of that," said my father, being now in a rancorous, and determined frame; "I am afraid that the temperature won't be above 160°, if so much; and it cools in passing through the air too fast. It will only make their eyes sharp, and their faces clean, as they should be on a holiday. No white feather, John Windsor, now! Ah, they've fetched the blacksmith, as I knew they would. Think of your wife and children, John, and of the British Constitution. Things must be come to a very pretty pass, if a man mayn't syringe a born jackass! Especially when the jackass kicks his gate in."

"In for a penny, then, in for a pound," his brother boiler answered, with his courage up; "whatever you order shall be done, friend Bubbly. This vat shall run away, before I do."

"I'll go bail for the front gate, Johnny, if you'll be ready for the rear attack, supposing they've the cheek to try one. This engine works a double hose, you see, on the principle of a well-coil. Now, my fine fellows, what do you want here?"

The blacksmith, though working against his will—for my father always paid him ready money—had prized one heavy gate off its hinges, and the other was swagging to fall with it.

"We wants you, guv'nor, and your scurvy flag;" cried the leader of the mob, a chimney-sweep.

"B'iler, b'iler; we wants the Tory b'iler!" cried a hundred dirty fellows, as the gates crashed in.

"Well, and you shall have him," said my father, who was standing just outside the slow-house door, with the nozzle of the hose tucked under his arm, and a rod in his right hand to put the pressure on; "if you come a yard further, you shall taste the boiler. Only let blacksmith Grimes get out of the way. I don't wish to boil a respectable neighbour. And I don't want to boil you, unless you insist on it."

Not only Grimes, but a great many others would have liked to get out of the way at this; but the bulk of the tumult behind shoved on, and the heads, that were fain to hang back, got jammed up in front against the smash, and then shot over. Father just waited, till the chimney-sweep, a termagant of the highest rank, was hurra-ing, and waving a soot-brush, —and then he let go hot candles at them. In a long white column, flew the scalding fluid, spreading, like a sheaf, when it met their faces, and coating every man of them with poisonous gray froth. No man could swear, for his mouth was bunged up; and no man could strike, for his arms were stuck to him, with a weight of deposit, like a stalactite. Good stearine it was, of the value of at least three halfpence a pound, in the unrefined state; and it went inside their shirts, and stung like hornets, and settled into every cracked place of the skin, and made a man tight in his linings. And to add to their grief, such a steam arose among them—not to mention something else beginning with same letters—that the slits of any eyes, that were left half open, were as useless as in a thick London fog.

"There's a deal more to come," said my father calmly; "noble reformers, stand shoulder to shoulder; as one of your writers has beautifully said—the deeper we go, the more strength we get."

The issue is told in a ballad written that same night at "*The Best End of the Scrag*;" which,—though inspired by Liberal ale, for "*The Scrag*" had not a drop left of its own, and was obliged to send across the road for it—is a poem of high merit; and my father was told upon the best authority

that the poet, from first to last, received nearly fifteen shillings for it. Our house subscribed for sixpence-worth, and so did Mr. Windsor; and all the boys of the lower order, up to Grotto-day, were singing—no matter what their politics might be—and wrapping their bulls' eyes up in, "The lay of the soporific soap-boilers." The Radicals bore this satire well, having had their own way in everything, and laughed on the right side of their mouths; and even the men, who had been cased in grease, made a good thing of it, when they scraped themselves, by going to the rag-and-bone-shops. Yet, as bad luck would have it, the leading mind among them—that of Mr. Joe Cowl, the Master-sweep—was not content, and broke out into a summons at the Clerkenwell Police Court. For Mr. Cowl, meeting all the first of the discharges, before the stearine was well up in the hose, was a loser instead of a receiver of deposit. All the soot on his body was clean washed off; and nothing being left to fill the pores, the abnormal exposure of his system led to a pungent, pervasive, and radical catarrh. Mrs. Cowl sent for a doctor, but her husband Joe had still enough vitality to kick him out; and then jumping from the frying-pan into the fire, shouted loudly for a lawyer; and he recommended law.

CHAPTER VIII.
FOR CHANGE OF AIR.

"But," said my father to Mr. John Windsor, who was urging him to leave home for a while, that Joe Cowl's anger might blow over; "people pretend not to understand it, John; but you know as well as I do what it is. How could I ever live, for a fortnight at a stretch, or even three weeks, as might be needful, without a breath of the air of the works, John?"

"When I was obliged to spend a week in Parree," replied Mr. Windsor (who, as Mrs. Windsor said, had "acclimatised himself uncommon quick to the French style, and their accent"), "I thought I should have died for a day or two, from the downright emptiness of the air. But, my dear fellow, I found out some places, where the air was as nourishing, every bit, as it is at our works on an over-time day. Bubbly, I contrived to bilk the doctor, by going twice a day to a place with a hole in it, over some large cookery vapours. And you must contrive to find a place like that. I'll tell you what, go away to the seaside. At the seaside now, they are always making smells."

"So they are, I am sure," said Mrs. Windsor, who was come to join in the attack on father; "the last time I was at Brighton, my dear, with all the poor children, how I envied you, dwelling,—as the poet so graphically describes it,—in the sweet fragrancy of home. Mr. Upmore, the air is never empty at any fashionable seaside place; and for the sake of your dear wife, and your wonderfully interesting boy, who is a dear friend of my clever Johnny's, you cannot, with any consistency whatever, refuse to respond to the call of duty; for duty it is, and should be looked at in that light, without a second thought of paltry money."

"She has the gift of eloquence," declared her husband; "and sometimes I almost wish she hadn't. It comes to her from her mother's side, whose mother was a celebrated Baptist preacher. And when it is upon her, she

has no consideration of other people's money, and not so very much of mine. But you must not take the whole of this for high talk, Bubbly. To make yourself scarce just now, will fetch you a pound, for every penny you have to spend. An old friend of mine is well up the back-stairs; and although he could never do a stroke for me—for some reason, which he explains much better than I can understand it—he whispered to me, last night, 'keep in with the gentleman, who boils higher up the Lane than you do. His fortune is made, if he keeps quiet, and the present Government remains in office. He will have more jobs than he can do, and he must call you in, to help him.' I thought I had better tell you, Bubbly; because we have always been straight-forward; and if you are pulled up in the Police-court, why, you might have to wait months, before you got a contract."

My father stood up, for nothing could be more illustrative of true friendship, more incentive to patriotism, and more ennobling to the human race, than this announcement from his brother boiler. He had passed through a good deal of emotion lately, having been not only toasted largely, wherever he appeared with his purse in his pocket, and visited with post-cards more than once (from people whose names were in the papers) but even invited to a hot dinner, which he took care to go to, at the Mansion-House. For that Lord-Mayor was not one of those, who desire to have no successor.

"John Windsor, we have always been straight-forward. There has never been the shadow of a doubt between us. Our friendship has never known a cloud upon it;" I was home for the holidays now, and these words of my father's made me stare a little; "you know what I am, John,—a humble Briton, who thinks for himself, and sticks to it. Business is business; politics come in the evening, to smoke a pipe with. When I was a Rad, I may have thought of making something out of it. But I only made a loss of two good hats."

"Hear, hear!" interrupted Mr. Windsor; "and now by repulse of the Rads, you have gained three hundred hats, the poet says."

"Stuff!" cried my father; "there were not thirty; and shocking bad hats all of them. You are welcome to your share, if you will take your half of this confounded summons, Windsor."

"Gentlemen, come," said Mrs. Windsor, "if you once begin with politics—the point is to settle where to go to, and I think Mrs. Upmore should have a voice in that. What coast do you prefer, my dear?"

"My views are of very little moment," mother answered quietly, as she came in, with a bottle of cherry-brandy in her hand; "Bucephalus is so bigoted. But I love to see the sun rise over the sea from the window, and then go to bed again."

"Your taste, ma'am, is of the very highest order," said Mr. Windsor, who never could persuade his wife to turn her hand to pickles, and bottled fruit, and gravies; "and many a time have I enjoyed the fine results that comes of it. To see the sun rise over the sea, and the poor fellows shaking about in their boats, and then to go to bed again, while they are catching fish enough for your breakfast, prawns, and lobsters, and a sole with egg and breadcrumbs, and perhaps (if they are lucky) just a salmon-collop—ah, that is what I call seaside! And then, you lounge about, and see fine ladies jumping up and down, as the white waves knock them; and then you have a pipe, and smell fine smells, and talk to an old salt, as if you were his captain; and he shows you, through his spy-glass, how rough it is outside, with the people in the vessels looking enviously at you; and by that time, Bubbly, why you want your dinner; and you eat it, as if you was made for nothing else."

"I don't remember much about it," answered father, though evidently struck by this description; "why, it must be thirty years since I saw the sea. Ah, how we go up and down in life! I dare say I was no bigger than that little shrimp there."

"Mr. Upmore!" exclaimed Mrs. Windsor, whose manner, we were told, was more aristocratic than anything on our side of King's Cross; "Mr. Upmore, with all your opportunities, is it possible that you have not ever

felt it your very first duty, to take your dear wife, and your Tommy, to the sea? Whatever should we do, without the sea? A great part of our commerce comes over it, and my Johnny can very nearly swim! Dear Mrs. Upmore, you should not lose a minute, in taking your darling boy to the sea. It seems to be considered so essential now, that all young persons should be taught to swim."

"My Tommy can fly, ma'am," replied dear mother; "and what is swimming to compare with that?"

"I'll tell you what," said Mr. Windsor, "if you want to see the sun rise over the sea, the best chance for it is on the east coast. I'm very partial to Brighton myself, not being so exclusive as Mrs. W. about a little smell here, or a sort of odour there. That feeling of the higher orders seems to be cutaneous."

"Spontaneous, you mean, Mr. Windsor, or perhaps contagious, or indigenous."

"I mean what I say, my dear. And what I say is this—to the best of my knowledge, the sun don't get up out of the sea, at Brighton, though he does come over it, in fine weather, by the time the upper classes are looking about. But I won't pretend to speak positive, because I never got up to look for him. Only this I do say, and it stands to reason,—if you want to compel him to get up there, you had better go where the sea runs east."

"To be sure, I see!" my father answered; "I am not sure, that I should have thought of that. John, you are a clever fellow, after all."

"I should hope that he was;" cried Mrs. Windsor; "because you have made yourself famous, Mr. Upmore, with my husband to stand in front of you, are you going to begin to look down upon us?"

"Don't be so hot, my dear. I assure you, Bubbly, that she means it for the moment; but it goes in two seconds, like a spurt of steam. Now, I happen to know a very nice little place, on the east coast, Norfolk or Suffolk, I

believe, for I never can carry all the counties in my head. Happystowe-on-Sea is the name of it; none of your blessed sewers there. I know a man who boils there, twice a week; he would let you in as a visitor, of course, and you would get the nourishment of his air. Barlow his name is, Billy Barlow; a rising man in compos, and cocoa; he has found a way to make one out of the other, and both of them out of old shoes, I believe; and I thought of running down to him, to get a wrinkle; but Mrs. W. seemed to think there was something *infra dig* in it."

"We cannot be too particular, in my humble opinion," said Mrs. Windsor, "not only not to admit any shadow of fraud, into our own transactions, but in no way to countenance any one tainted with secrets, however lucrative."

"That is the true way of looking at things; all on the square, ma'am, and all above board. And nothing else answers in the long run, does it? However," continued my father, "if I should by any chance be down that way, I might like to look in at Barlow's works,—without letting him know who I was, of course. I should understand all his devices, at a glance."

"He would know me in a moment, if I went down;" Mr. Windsor was trying not to wink at father; "but he never would guess that you were in the trade, if you wear your blue coat, and brass buttons, the one that makes the boys call you 'the Admiral.' And by the sea-side, that would be the proper thing. Only fair play, Bubbly, and honour bright. Snacks—as our Jack says—in whatever you find out."

"Pooh!" cried father; "after all our experience, what could a country bumpkin teach us? Ah, Mrs. Windsor, what things we could tell you, if ladies' nerves were stronger! But, John, I've a great mind to take your advice, and encourage the policy of our noble Government, in doing me a good turn, as early as they can. We will get away before those unprincipled Rads can serve their skulking summons. That Joe Cowl means to get up to-morrow, after shamming to be dead for a fortnight,—a Conservative sweep would have cured his cold, by stopping up a chimney—and on Friday he goes for his summons, I hear. The Beak is a

Rad, and will let him have it. I shall trust you to keep it all dark about us, and mum's the address of our luggage, and letters. But Friday will find all the Upmore family stowed away happy, at Happystowe."

My father was ever a man of his word. He made his arrangements for half-time boiling, and the completion of all contracts, and left money enough for a fortnight's work, and then we set off in the soap-van; with old *Jerry* in the shafts, and a hamper of good things, and our best clothes on, and *Grip* sitting up in front, and the tilt hanging down, as if by accident, over the third hoop from the back, so that nobody could tell that we had got a bit of luggage. And we jogged along up the Lane first towards Hampstead, so that all the neighbours thought we were going for a pic-nic, as indeed we thoroughly deserved to do, and they wished us a pleasant day and no rain; for they all had a kindly will to us. But as soon as we had thanked them, and got them out of sight, what did father do but turn old *Jerry*, and take the shortest cut to Shoreditch?

At that time, London was not such a thorough rat-warren of railways as it is now; and although I had travelled by steam before, it was new enough to be delightful. We were going by a line, which was then considered the most dangerous in Great Britain; and this made my mother put her head out of the window, in her anxiety about me, and father, whenever there was anything at all to see. We wanted to look out for ourselves; but she declared that she understood things best; and there was no chance of getting at the other window, because four people put a cloth along their knees, and went on eating, for leagues, and hours. So my father went to sleep, and I tried to get peeps (behind dear mother's bonnet) of the far world flying by. With all my heart I longed to see the sea, of which I had heard so many things, wonderful, terrible, and enchanting. My mother had bought me a straw-hat, with a blue ribbon on it, like a gallant sailor's; and she should have endeavoured, after that, to show me the sea, if it ever came in sight. But nothing that I could say—though I never stopped bothering, as she called it—would

keep her attention to that point; and I found out afterwards the reason for it; she was not at all sure about knowing the sea, when she saw it, and was afraid of making some mistake.

"What do I care about the sea?" said father, rather grumpily, when I pestered him. "People call it the sea, because you can't see it. Or if you do, you can't see anything else. I would much rather have a good London fog. Go to sleep, boy; and don't keep jerking at my legs so."

My father had been out of sorts for some time, which had made it desirable that he should come away, even without any summons against him. His appetite was queer, and he wanted setting up. Before Mr. Windsor came urging him so, I heard him say to mother,

"A leg of mutton goes twice with me now; and I call that a very serious sign."

"Then be more free-handed with your money," answered mother.

And now he was touchy, because poor *Grip* though accustomed to living in a tub at school, was aggrieved at the box which the Company provided for dogs on their travels, and expressed his grief in a howl, that out-howled the engine. His chest was capacious, and his lungs elastic, his heart also of the finest order; and for these gifts of nature, my father condemned him!

"Now, rouse up, rouse up, everybody;" father shouted, as if we had all been asleep—which he alone had been, in spite of *Grip*—when the bus from the "Happystowe Road," (which was five or six miles from the genuine Happystowe) pulled up, in a ring of newly planted trees, and in front of a porch with square pillars to it. "Tommy, look sharp, and count all our boxes in. Put them down in Latin, if it comes more easy. Sophy, accept my arm, up the steps; never pretend to be younger than you are. Mrs. Roaker, we are come to spend a week with you if agreeable, and not too expensive."

"Mr. Upmore!" said mother, in a tone of quiet dignity, such as she had heard Mrs. Windsor use; "as if a few pounds made any difference to you! We are out for the holidays, and we mean to have them."

"Then the thing to begin with is a rattling good dinner," father answered, without any dignity at all; "bless my—something the dinner goes into, Mrs. Roaker,—if it isn't going on for seven o'clock! And nothing all the way, but hard boiled eggs, and a cold duck, and ham sandwiches. I never was so hungry in all my life; starving is the proper word for it. What can we have for dinner, ma'am, and what is the shortest time for it?"

"Anything you please to name, sir;" said the landlady, who understood things; "and the time will naturally depend upon the nature of the *plats* you order."

"No foreign kickshaws, and no French plates, for me, ma'am! A pair of fried soles, and a bit of roast mutton, hot from the fire, and a cold apple-pie. Sophy, can you think of anything else you want?"

"Can we have a bedroom with a fine sea view?" My mother had been pensive all day, and religious, because of leaving home, and of the dangers of the train. "We have not seen the sea yet, Mrs. Roaker, to our certain knowledge. You must not suppose us to be any sort of Cockneys; and indeed we live quite outside of London, in a beautiful place, with green fields round it; still we are what you may call inlanders, and we feel a kind of interest in the sea."

"Sophy, you had better order dinner, after that;" said my father, very shortly; "now, Tommy, you be off. I am not going out, till I've had my dinner. But I can't stand any more of your plague about the sea. Find somebody to show you where it is; or you ought to find it out, by the row it makes. I hear a noise now, like an engine with the steam slack. But don't tumble into it, when you find it; though you never were born to be drowned, that I'll swear."

Without any answer to this cut at me,—which I did not deserve, as old Rum could have told him—I whistled for *Grip*, who was looking about, after running all the way from the station, for any dog anxious to insult him; and as soon as he came, and made a jump at me, we set off together without more ado, to find out where the sea was, by the noise it made; of which I was beginning now to read in Homer.

CHAPTER IX.
THALATTA!

It was five years now, since I had first gone up, (without any intention of doing so) from the surface of the earth into the regions of the air, through the sudden expansion of my heart and system, at the thought of three days' holiday. In the interval, there had been times of elation and elevation, when it was difficult for me to keep down, and the mere shake of an elbow would have sent me up. And among them, I recollect one Christmas-eve, when there was a hard frost on, and the people at the Hampstead ponds were skating, and the ice was all green for boys to slide on, and the trees on the hill were all feathered with snow, and Jack Windsor came up to me, and said, "plum-pudding for dinner, at your house, Tommy; I smelled it, as I came up the Lane"—I was all on the flutter to fly, and astonish the people, who were putting skates on; and I could not have helped it—for there was nothing to lay hold of—if *Grip* (who was full of my bodily welfare) had not laid hold of me by the tails of the scarlet comforter, which mother had knotted so tightly, that I could not get it off.

"Get away, you vile dog! Go up, Tommy," Jack Windsor cried, and would gladly have kicked *Grip*, if prudence had permitted it; "oh, Tommy, do go up; I have heard so much about it, and I'd give anything to see you fly!"

For my part, I was not at all afraid; my feet were off the ground, and there is very little doubt, that I should have escaped from the comforter, and *Grip*, if Jack had not made such a stupid fuss about it.

"Halloa there! What are you boys doing?" A heavy policeman came grumbling along, without any sense of the situation; "if you don't move on, and take that beast of a dog further, I'll walk you pretty quick to the station."

"331 V.," answered Jack, who inherited his mother's lofty style, "if you knew who we are, you'd employ your cheek to keep your tongue in, and save me the trouble of reporting you."

The constable pretended not to hear him; but the whole of my volatile power was gone—so sensitive has it always been—and instead of going up to the sky, I was glad to sit down upon the broad back of the faithful dog.

And now, I can assure you, and you will readily believe it, that having been plagued so long by boys, (and grown-up people, quite as troublesome, at times) concerning what had happened to me, at an early age, and being rebuked, and jeered, and scoffed at—sometimes for having this gift, and sometimes for not making more of it, and sometimes for setting up a false claim to it—young as I was, I had thought a good deal, and made up my mind, in fifty different ways, about it.

But though my conclusions perpetually varied, there was one grain of wisdom to be found in all. It had pleased Heaven, to afflict me with an unusually light corporeal part, and then to relieve that affliction, in some measure, by the gift of a buoyant and complacent mind; so that I was able—unless a bad cold, or measles, or mumps, or chilblains stopped me —to be hopeful that all would turn out for the best, and to keep my nature boyish, throughout a boyhood of some perplexity.

Grip, though faithful, and sage, as almost all the patriarchs put together, might still be considered a juvenile dog, by those who dwell chiefly on the right side of things. To say that his heart was still in the right place, would be little less than an insult to him, and to the great race of which he was one; but it is not so wholly a matter of course, that his mind was still ardent, and his spirit lofty. Very few "Scientists" of any candour could have looked at *Grip*, when prepared for battle (with his ears pricked up, and his neck on the rasp, and his tail set with stiffening bulges) without finding a nobler result of evolution, and a likelier survival, than their own.

His thankful spirit had not yet exhausted the joys of freedom from the Railway box; and perhaps—though it is not for me to say it—the Happystowe air was more mercurial than that of our works, which confined his meditations too persistently to one theme—bone. But let that pass; it is quite impossible to explain everything that happens; all I know is that *Grip* set off from the porch of the *Twentifold Arms Hotel*, with a flourish, and a scurry, and a gambol of delight. With a gentle breeze moving behind me, I started, to catch him and get the first sight of the sea; and then, down a steep path, we came round the corner of what must have been a live rock, and behold——

Behold! was a word you might have shouted at me, like thunder, without my knowing it. Because my whole nature was absorbed in beholding, or gazing, or staring, or mooning, or being bemooned—for the things were done to me, without my doing any one of them. Behind me, shone the low summer sun, throwing out my shadow any length it pleased, on an endless, measureless, countless, unimaginable world of silver, like the moon come down.

If I could have uttered any syllable, to let off, or thought of any definite idea, to keep in the wondrous inconceivable expansion of my nature, perhaps, even now, I might have stayed upon the ground. But being as I was, away I went, starting, at a height of about ten feet above the level of Spring-tides, with a moderate Westerly breeze behind me, and the light of the sinking sun coming up, under the soles of my shoes, as I slowly went round. And unluckily I had all my best clothes on—new from a shop down in Liverpool Street, the first Sunday of the summer holidays.

People, who have never been up like this, might suppose, at first sight, that I was terrified; especially at being carried out to sea, as my first acquaintance with that great space. But without laying claim to any share of courage, I may state, as a simple matter of fact, that I happened to feel no fear whatever. My father, (as truthful a man as ever lived, and from whom I inherit that quality) had said that I never was born to be drowned; and if I thought at all (which I disremember doing) that alone

would have reassured me. At any rate, I looked around, as calmly as if I were sitting down to dinner; but with this disadvantage, that I could not keep my gaze very firmly fixed upon anything, because of the rotation of my body. For instance, I was able to shout down to *Grip* (who was howling most mournfully in the gap, and making sad jumps to come after me) that I was all right, and would come back, by and by; but before I could judge whether he was consoled, my eyes were on a ship a long way out. If there had been much wind, perhaps it would have proved a ticklish thing for me; but the air was calm, and full of yellow light, the sea was below me, like a floor of silver, the sky of a pure soft blue, wherever the sun did not interfere with it; and nothing on any side suggested danger, or uneasiness.

But, whatever the state of things may be, the human element is certain to rush in, and spoil all the comfort of nature. I had not been at all disconcerted, at perceiving that some people on the beach were surprised by my appearance, at a considerable height above their heads. They were calling out loudly to one another, and running together, or running away, and rubbing their eyes, as if the sun had taken the accuracy out of them. This rather pleased me, and improved my flight (which depends very much upon the approval of mankind), and I was beginning to practise movements, which I had thought of, and heard of from Jack Windsor. Jack had been taking swimming lessons, and being a wonderfully heavy fellow, had tried very hard to keep his head up. He had learned the whole theory of it beautifully, and showed me how easy it was to do; but as yet he had never been able to do it. Whatever I have done above the surface of the earth—which people are stupid enough to call flying—is nothing more than swimming in the air, or floating; or best of all, perhaps, I should say treading, as people who are heavy enough "tread water." And my great desire was to be my own master, to steer myself a little, as a man can do in swimming; instead of going round and round, at the air's discretion, like a bunch of lime-berries in September.

But, just as I was learning with my hands and feet, and some guidance of the silken summer tunic at my hips,—what did I discover but a great long gun, taken up by a man, from a boat upon the beach, and then being pointed with a careful aim at me! I endeavoured to scream out—"I am Tommy; only Tommy Upmore going for a fly; if you shoot me, you will be hanged for murder!"—but I give you my word that my fright was so great, that no sound of any use would come out of my mouth. Old Rum's cane was quite a joke, compared to this. Every atom of my levity turned to lead, my hands fell to my sides, and my feet struck together, and I dropped, like a well-bucket, when the rope is broken.

And I never had a luckier drop in my life—good as it is for all mortals to come down—for just above my hair, (which had been floating, like a sunset cloud, they say, but was now standing out, like a badger's, with alarm) a heavy charge of duck-shot, that would have killed *Grip* dead, went whistling like a goods'-train engine; and a streak of white still may be discovered in my head, from the combination of fear and fact.

And my drop was quite as lucky at the lower end; for descending, as you might say without exaggeration, almost vertically, (though my head, the lightest portion of my system, still was up) instead of falling into the sea, I was received in a sail, spread to catch me by a very lovely boat.

Some moments elapsed, as I have reason to believe, before either my rescuers, or myself, were fit to go into all the questions that arose. Naturally enough, they were surprised at the style of my visit to them; while I was not only embarrassed by shyness, at finding myself among great people, but also to some extent confused in mind, from the many gyrations of my upward, and the rapid descent of my downward course; moreover, I had never been in a boat till now, and the motion of the boards upon the water disconcerted me, more than any action of the air.

But while I was balancing myself like this, after stepping from the sail that was spread for me, a beautiful lady, who had been sitting on a fur, and looking at me with surprise and interest, arose and came towards

me, with some little doubt enlarging the brightness of her large bright eyes.

"Why, you are a boy—a boy!" she cried, as if Nature ought to have made me a girl; "and as pretty a boy as I ever beheld. From the way you went round, and the height it was up, I thought it must be a machine at least—one of those wonderful things they invent, to do almost anything, nowadays. Whatever you are, you can speak, I am sure; and I am not going to be afraid of you. Where do you come from? And what is your name? And how long have you been up in the air, like that? And have you got any father, and mother? And how did you get such most wonderful hair, like spun silk, every bit of it? And—and, why don't you answer me?"

"If you please, ma'am," I said, looking up at her with wonder, for I never had seen such a beautiful being, although I had been to a play, several times; "I was trying to think, what question you would please to like me to begin with answering. I'm afraid that I cannot remember them all, because of my head going round so. But my name is 'Tommy Upmore,' and I come from Maiden Lane, St. Pancras."

"St. Pancras! Why, that is in London, surely. Did you come in a balloon, or how can you have done it? Sit down and rest; I am sure you must be tired. Though you look like a rose, Master Tommy Upmore."

I answered the beautiful lady, as soon as presence of mind permitted, that I had not come the whole way from London, through the sky, as she seemed to suppose, but only from yonder place on the shore; where I showed her *Grip*, still howling now and then, and striving with all his eyes, and heart, to make sure what was become of me. She replied that, even so, it was in her opinion wonderful; and she doubted if she could have been brought to believe it, unless she had seen it with her own eyes. I told her that several most eminent men of science saw nothing surprising in it; but accounted for it easily, in various ways, without any two having to use the same way.

Meanwhile she was begging me not to be afraid, herself having now overcome all fear; and she signed to the boatmen (who had fallen back, with their frank faces wrinkled, as a puzzle is) that they might come forward, and be kind to me. It was not in their power to do this, because they had not yet finished staring; therefore she offered me her own white hand, and I wished that I had washed mine lately.

"These are my children," she said, as I followed her down the planks, without a word; "it was Laura, who saw you first up in the air, and Roly who ordered the men to row over, when that wicked young man put his gun up. We thought it was some new kind of bird. And so you are—a boy bird! Roly, and Laura, let me introduce you to this young gentleman. There is nothing about him to be afraid of, although he has come down from the clouds, or rather from the clear sky, this beautiful evening. He declares that he can be scientifically explained; and when that can be done, there is nothing more to say. Roly has never known what fear is, ever since he cut his teeth."

From all I have seen of this gentleman since then—and I have seen a great deal of him for twenty years, and never can see too much of him—I can fully confirm what his dear mother said. Just then, he was a boy of about my age, or a year or two older he might be; but pounds, and tens, and twenty pounds, heavier, and an inch or two taller, and many shades darker. I was as fair in complexion, before a great mob of troubles came darkening me, as if I had sprung from a boiling of Pontic wax, besprinkled with roses of Cashmere. But Roly (or to give him his full deserts, Sir Roland Towers-Twentifold) was a dark, and thoughtful, and determined lad, who meant to make his mark upon our history, and is doing it.

He came up, and took my hand, as if he would squeeze any cloudiness out of me; and nothing but the pinches I had often had at school, enabled me to bear it without a squeak. He had been at the helm, as they call it, to direct the boat the right way to catch me; and although he was

greatly surprised, he concluded—as all Englishmen do upon such occasions—that the time to explain things would ensue, after they had been dealt with.

CHAPTER X.
THE NEW ADMIRAL.

To me, who am accustomed to myself, it has always seemed much more wonderful, that my father should deny my peculiar powers, than that I should possess them. "Go up, Tommy," he has said a thousand times; "don't be so shy about it, but up with you! The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Only fly up to the bedroom window sill, as that little sparrow from the road has done, and I'll own that I'm a fool, and you a wonder. But, until you have done it, in my sight, my son, I shall stick to my old experience, that all the human race are liars, but not one of them a flyer."

His strong opinion proved itself, as the manner of strong opinions is; and instead of being able to arise, while he was waiting, with his hands in his pockets, and a pipe in his mouth, I was more inclined to go into the ground, whenever it happened to be soft.

And so, even now, (when some fifty people had seen me in the air, and were ready to make oath to a great deal more than I had done) father stuck to it, that they all were liars, or fools, or crazy, or else tipsy at the least. But he scarcely knew what to say at first, when just as he was going to sit down to dinner, a mighty great noise arose under the window, of sailors hurraing, and the brass-band roaring, and *Grip* as loud as any of them, barking at his utmost.

"D—n it," said my father to my mother; "is this the quiet place John Windsor spoke of? When a man can't even sit down to his dinner——"

"Dinner indeed! Don't think twice of your dinner;" cried mother from the window, in great excitement, "here is a thing that you never saw before, and will never see again, if you live to be a hundred. Our Tommy in a flag, and all the sailors in the kingdom, taking off their hats, and

cheering him, and the dear little poppet as modest as ever, exactly like an Angel! And a beautiful lady, you can see by the look that all the place belongs to her—you can tell at a glance who she is, of course—Bucephalus, how slow you are!"

"Slow, for not knowing at a glance a female, I never saw or heard of, in all my life! And in a strange place I was never in before! How should I know her from Adam—or at least, Eve?"

"Bucephalus! Why, of course she must be Lady Towers-Twentifold, widow of the late, and sincerely lamented, Sir Robert Towers-Twentifold, who died, after tortures surpassing description, from swallowing his own corundum tooth. Every stick, and stone, for ten miles in every direction belongs to him, and he leaves a lovely widow, and an only son, the present Sir Roland Towers-Twentifold, scarcely any older than our Tommy, and an only daughter Laura. Bless me, how true everything is coming! I can believe every word of it, now I see them."

"Including the man with the corundum tooth. In the name of Moses, Sophy, how the deuce have you found out all this already?"

"I have found out nothing; and I am surprised at your low way of putting it, Bucephalus. When I met the chambermaid, could I do less than pass the time of day to her? But look, they have carried our Tommy three times, with the 'Conquering Hero comes' twice and a half, round the—I forget what dear Jane Windsor says is the right foreign name for it—and I think, Mr. Upmore, the least we can do, is to throw up the window, and bow our acknowledgments gracefully, as the papers say."

"I'm blowed if I'll do anything of the sort. Half a crown's worth of coppers would be gone in no time. Keep behind the curtain, Sophy; or back we all go to business to-morrow morning; and I heartily wish we had never come away. At home, when I am hungry, I can get my dinner."

"Oh dear, he has spoiled his white ducks with tar, and *Grip* is in a dreadful mess of wet, and the sailors want to hoist him too, if he would only let them! I see what it is—how stupid of me! Tommy has been flying

all over the sea, and *Grip* has been swimming after him! Oh, Bucephalus, how can you eat your dinner? Is this a proper time, for you to be devouring dinner?"

"You are right enough there, Sophy;" answered father, "I ought to have had it five hours ago. I call it tempting Providence with one's constitution, to go so long after breakfast-time. I only hope, the zanies won't come wanting to hoist me."

Alas, that the stronger of my parents should have shown such incredulity! Did it follow that, inasmuch as he was heavy, all his productions must draw the beam? If so, dead must drop all the wit of Falstaff, and all the sweet humour of Thackeray. And how could my father have made light sperm, or the soap, that he labelled "the froth of the sea"? Such questions, however, come dangerously near to science, and its vast analogies. Enough, that my father paid dear in the end, for all this incredulity; as will be made manifest, further on; and sorry shall I be to tell it.

My dear mother was already of opinion, that it was a crime upon any one's part, even to attempt to explain my achievements, and downright treason to deny them. When the beautiful Lady Twentifold—as people called her for convenience, though her proper name was *Towers-Twentifold*—came, when the public was tired of shouting, to learn all that could with propriety be learned, of the origin of her "great little wonder," few people verily would believe what my mother was fanciful enough to do. The lady (to whom the hotel belonged, and all the people there, in my opinion) sat down in the parlour downstairs, with my hand in hers—for she had taken dear liking to me, because I resembled a child she had lost—and she begged the landlady to go to my mother, without any card or formality, and ask whether she might have the pleasure of seeing, and telling her about her boy.

It is a very clumsy thing for me to find fault with the behaviour of my parents, and I am not prepared to do so now. There may have been fifty reasons, clear to people much wiser than myself; but certainly I was

amazed, and angry, when Mrs. Roaker came back to say, that the lady from London was so fatigued, with the dreadful effects of her journey, that she begged to thank her ladyship most warmly, for very great kindness to her dear son; but felt quite unequal to an interview with her.

"How many of you are there, Tommy?" Lady Twentifold asked, without my knowing why. But she always went straight to the meaning of things.

"Only me, ma'am, if you please;" I answered, looking up, in fear that there ought to have been more; "but I did hear a woman say, that there had been another; but he went to heaven, before me, I believe."

The lady looked at me, with her eyes quite soft, which they had not been, when she received that message; and she seemed to be uncertain, whether she was right, in putting her next question.

"Has your father been married more than once, my dear? I mean, is this lady your own dear mother, or become your mamma, since you can remember?"

I told her, that I could not remember any one thing about it, though I often thought. But this was my mother, Mrs. Upmore; everybody said so; and more than that, there was nobody else in all the world, who made a quarter so much of me.

"Tommy, I am quite satisfied upon that point," she answered; "there may be some reason, which I do not know of. Or perhaps your dear mother is not at all strong. Give her my compliments, and say that I hope she will be better soon, and the Happystowe air relieve her weakness. Now shake hands with Roly, and little Laura; and good-bye till we see you again, flying Tommy."

I had told her that my name was "flying Tommy;" and she was much pleased to hear it, because it showed, that the Happystowe air was not to blame, for my adventure. Then Sir Roland came up, and took my hand,

and said that he hoped I would take him for a fly; and then, the most beautiful child I had ever set eyes on, stole up shyly, and put her little hand in mine, and left me to say good-bye to her.

On the following day, I felt as heavy as *Grip* (who weighed half a pound for every ounce that a human being of his size would weigh), and my father and my mother agreed, from different points of view, about me,—that I must be kept indoors, and fed, and put at my books, to steady me. We had brought some Greek in the bottom of a box, which father considered great nonsense, though it might be very good for children. And he told me to find out the Greek for soap, and spermaceti, and steam-engine, and write them down, so that he could read them; which I entirely failed to do. Meanwhile he set off, with his Admiral's coat, to inspect the sea and the shipping, and Mr. Barlow's boiling premises.

The day after that again was Sunday, when the rule of our house, and of most houses in Maiden Lane, was to lie in bed until nine o'clock, and have breakfast at ten, and attend to the dinner till dinner-time, and saunter in the fields towards Highgate, if the weather was fine in the afternoon, and to go to church, or chapel, sometimes, if there was nothing else to do in the evening; and then have a good supper, and be off to bed. But now mother said, and my father was quite unable to gainsay it, that, being in a country place like this, where everything depends upon example, with my father acknowledged to be an Admiral—not only because of his coat, and occasional d—ns, and general demeanour, but also because he had shaken his head, when requested to look at a ship through a spy-glass for twopence, and told the ancient tar that he had seen a deal too much of that—moreover with Tommy adored by all the aristocracy of the neighbourhood, and by the brave sailors, and people of less refinement, accepted as an angel, the least we could do was to make an effort, and try to be at church by eleven o'clock.

My father replied, that as concerned himself there need be no difficulty whatever, because as soon as he had done his breakfast, his only preparation was to smoke a pipe; but he did not believe that it was

possible for mother, (who had spent all Saturday in the village-shops, because she had come in such hurry from home, that she had brought nothing fit to be seen in) to have all her toggery spick-and-span, and her hair done up to the nines, so early. But, if only to show him how little he knew, my mother was ready before he was; and father declared that she ruined his sleep, having got up to see the sun rise upon the sea, and stopped up to see herself grow brighter, and brighter, in the looking-glass. Dear mother had a great mind not to go to church, with such a wicked story ringing in her ears; until father told her that she looked stunning, and was fit to be put on a transparent lid—the lid of a box of transparent soap.

"Dear Bucephalus, now you see," she said, as she placed her primrose glove, on the sleeve of his blue coat with brass buttons, "one little portion perhaps of the reason, which led me to decline an interview, that night, with Lady Towers-Twentifold. My main reason was, of course, that I knew so thoroughly well what ladies are. If I had allowed her to see me, and satisfy all her great curiosity, about this wonderful darling of a Tommy, the chances are ten to one, that her ladyship would never have invited him to Twentifold Towers. But now, I intend that he shall go there; and what will the Windsors say to that?"

"Well, that was a very fine reason, Sophy. But I don't see the other, that I ought to see."

"Then Tommy is sharper than you, ten times. But walk a little better, if you please, my dear. Who can take you for an Admiral, if you drag your feet like that?"

From a joke, Mr. Windsor's idea had grown into a great and solid fact. Mrs. Roaker, and most of the Happystowe people, had made up their minds by this time, that my father was "Admiral Upmore." He was too honest, and plain a man, to encourage this mistake for a moment, and, whenever he got the chance, declared most stoutly, that he was no Admiral. The public, however, would not believe him, having met with some indications in commercial dealings with him, that he prized the

royal effigy; from which it was clear, what his motive was in desiring to disguise his rank. And the Boots of the *Twentifold Arms* could swear that he saw *Admiral* printed, on the back of the label of a hairy trunk, which had only B. U. on the front of it. And so he did, to a certain extent; for mother had taken an advertising card beginning with *Admirable*, and cut it across, and put father's initials on the other side.

"They may call me what they like," my father said, when tired of contradiction, "so long as they don't charge me for it. *Admiral* Upmore serves my turn, uncommonly well, for two things. Billy Barlow would lock his gate, if he knew that I am only Boiler Upmore; and I am finding out some fine things there. And again, if any lawyer comes sneaking after my heels, with that chummy's process, he'll find his mistake in the visitor's list. But, Tommy, you'll catch it, if you let out a word of this in Maiden Lane. Why, I never should hear the last of it!"

And so the whole three of us went to church; and the sailors sitting on the tombstones—most of which were like chests of drawers, but without any handles to the names below—touched their hats to the Admiral's lady, and the gallant Admiral himself, and the smart little chap, who had been for a fly, like the cherub aloft, who smiles luck to poor Jack. It was one of dear mother's proudest moments—for the men at our works would never touch their hats, unless they had been tipped a shilling quite lately—and she bowed with her feathers (which had been a cock's) throwing off quite a flash, and a rustle; until she was compelled to look very grave, by the remark of an ancient tar, that he had never seen so fine a woman.

But alas, how fate does ring her changes with articulate-speaking mortals—the triumph of the chime, the hesitation of the back-stroke, and the toll of disappointment! Ere ever the bells in the tower had ceased, and the organ taken up the tale, dear mother was a pensive-hearted female, and her feathers out of plume. For in coming up the

aisle, she had whispered to the buxom pew-opener; "Lady Towers-Twentifold has been seeking to make my acquaintance. Can we sit anywhere near her pew?"

"Certainly, ma'am;" said Mrs. Button, turning the handle of a large enclosure; "the Admiral, and yourself, can have her ladyship's pew, this morning, and this evening too, if you come again. Her ladyship has fifteen pews, in the fifteen parishes she owns, and she takes them all in turn; and it won't be our turn, for ten Sundays yet."

CHAPTER XI.
LARGE IDEAS.

Perhaps it was lucky for me, that my mother had failed to amaze Lady Twentifold, with the elegance of her apparel. But after having taken all that trouble, and lost all her comfort of the morning, she felt it no less than a personal slight, that her ladyship should have disgraced herself so, by neglecting divine worship.

"But she went to some other church," said father.

"I don't believe a word of it," answered mother, with both hands on her prayer-book; "she spent her whole morning in bed, no doubt. I never could endure those slothful ways; and the less we have to do with such people, the better."

"Why, who ever dreamed of our having anything to do with them?" My father was astonished at any new idea always. "Sophy, I won't have this rubbish any more. I came down here, to enjoy myself, and live well, and improve my liver; as well as to bilk the vile harpies of the law, and find out Billy Barlow's tricks. But if I'm to put out my pipe, and smoke wet rolls (like Tom's taffy-sucks), and never be seen in my shirt-sleeves, and never get a smell of hot meat, till the bats are about, and be cut short of my d—ns indoors, and backed up in them out of doors,—why the world will have come to such a stuck-up pitch, as would soon turn me into a Radical."

My mother said less, but pondered more. In bygone days, she had seemed content with the place in which she found herself, proud of the works, and the sample-boxes, and our renown for quality; and insisting upon it, that we should be styled in all transactions "Upmore & Co." But lately, or indeed for a long time now, her mind had been taking an elevated tone, which lowered the quality of our victuals. She talked a

great deal more of honour, and much less of honesty; she began to look down upon the Sunday papers; and she would not let her friends say "Ma'am" to her. My father declared, that this disease began with my going to the *Partheneion*, and was made much worse by Mrs. Windsor, and the four professors, and was now turned into a pestilence, by these bathing-machines, and the sailors at the church, and the brass-horn rogues coming round with the cap, and "my lady, if you please," upon the sands.

This "growth of refinement" as dear mother called it,—"spread of humbug" was my father's name for it—turned her attention, quite suddenly, to what she called my associations. The habit of my body, and mind, had been that of London boyhood in general,—to rush into anything going on, without waiting for an introduction, to give my opinion without invitation upon any public spectacle, or even a proceeding intended to be private until I came round the corner, and upon every occasion to ignore humanity's false exclusiveness. But on Monday morning, when we sat down to look at the people bathing—which my father, from some old-fashioned feeling, would never stop to do, but kept his distance,—mother began to give me a lesson, concerning the duties of society.

"Tommy," she said, "did you remark that the little boys go into one machine, and the little girls into the other? And they are not allowed, by the Board of Health, to be less than fifty yards apart."

"Yes, mother," I replied, "I was looking at that; and it seems to be the order on the board. But somehow they seem to contrive, in spite of it, to get all together in the water. And the girls—if I can make out which they are—seem to go all the way over to the boys! The board says that they will be prosecuted, with the extreme rigour of the law. There goes another girl, I declare!"

"Hush, Tommy, hush! Or society will expel us, like a pair of Pariahs. What I want you to notice, for your own good, is that high society has rules quite different from what the children in the street have. You,

unluckily, have been permitted, while your father was in a smaller way of business, to associate with almost any boy of respectable trousers, in the roadway. I admit that I have not been as strict as I should be, partly because it was no good. But now it is high time to draw the line. You see how they put a cord along down there? Now what do you suppose they do it for?"

"I am sure I don't know, mother; unless it is, for people to tumble over it."

"No, Tommy, no. It is to keep the people out. The inferior classes must not come interfering with those who can pay for all the room they want. Your father is a Tory; but I begin to think, that I shall be a Radical; because I find them make people pay more, for getting into anything. A ticket for a week, for both of us, to see the people bathe, and dress their hair, and everything, was only half a crown for me, and fifteenpence for you, my dear! And you may sit, all the time, on the ground of the earth, which is so much cleaner than the seats they make. Come into this hole, with the rushes on the top—where I dare say some wild animal has lived—and never mind the people in the waves, my dear. What I want you to be, is a great man, Tommy; a very great man, who may look down upon the little ones, and remember (when he has lost his own dear mother) that he owes all his greatness to her counsel, and high principles."

My dear mother spoke with such depth of feeling—especially in reference to her own end—that I had not the least idea what to say, and did not like to cry, until I had waited for some more.

"School-life is hardening you, my son;" she said. "I have known the day, when you would have been crying long ago, at the description of all that I go through. However, it is all for the best, and my own doing. I must expect you to grow up. And grown-up men must never cry. Tommy, you can have two bull's-eyes, out of my pocket, if you know where to find them, while I am wiping my poor eyes. They were under my handkerchief right side down, and the old pair of gloves on the top of them, that I put on when the promenade is over. You have got them, my

son? Well, take one at a time, and don't bite them, until I have said a few words. Don't be afraid, Tommy. I am not going to deliver a lecture, such as nobody ever that knows me could expect of me. You will have a great mind, my dear, as well as five talents of the body that will come to five and twenty, when the woman begins to sweep the house. And with all these great blessings of the Lord upon you, your first duty is to keep them all to yourself. That was one reason, why I would not come out, when they made such a fuss about you, the other night. They had no right to come between you and me; and heartily thankful as I felt to them, is it likely that I would put up with that sort of thing?"

"But, mother," I could not help saying, "suppose there had been nobody there, when I came down? You were out of sight altogether; and though I might not have gone down through the water, if my legs had gone in, they would have stuck there."

"Don't talk of such dreadful things, my dear. I am speaking sincerely out of gratitude. No one has ever accused your poor mother of any deficiency in that. But I think, that the least Lady Twentifold could do, was to come to church on Sunday, if only to thank the Lord for the service she had been enabled to render you. Few ladies have had such a chance afforded them; but she thinks much more of her fifteen pews. Now, Tommy, if you meet her on the beach, or any of the members of her family, you are not to rush up to them, as if you were under a great obligation, and make them talk large. You may show yourself; but wait for them to accost you, as Mrs. Windsor says. You know what to accost a person means."

"Yes, mother, from *costa*, the Latin for a rib. And it often comes in Homer. 'And thus accosting him in reply spake sovereign Agamemnon.' Old Rum does it like that, nearly always."

"Tommy, what a clever boy you are! I love to hear a bit of Latin from you. But whatever you say to the Twentifold people, you never must speak of your master as 'Old Rum.' It sounds quite low, and it contains no learning. You may speak of Dr. Rumbelow, if you like, and your place of education, the *Pantheon*—though why it should have the same name

as a bazaar, I am very much afraid I shall never understand. But mind, more than anything else, my son, what I am going to tell you now. You say that none of them asked you, on Friday, what was your father's path in life."

"No, mother; none of them said a word about it. All they wanted to know was about myself. But I'm not sure, I did not tell about Old Rum."

"Well, it won't matter much, if you did, my dear. But the boys at school call you 'soap,' and 'tallow,' and 'bubbles,' and 'dips,' and a quantity of things; all of which prove how low they are themselves. Now, we will not allow these great people to do that. And the only way to stop them, is not to let them know private matters, that can be no concern of theirs. Above all things, be truthful as the day, my son. Your father is not an Admiral; and you must acknowledge that he is not—supposing that the question should come up—and if they want to know any more about him, which people of any good manners would not, just tell them (in so many words) the truth—that your father is a gentleman, the head of his own firm of merchants in the Metropolis, and invited to dine at the Mansion-house, from his eminence in politics."

"But suppose they should ask about the boiling, mother; and the things that we sell, and the smell in the Lane——"

"What a stupe you are! As if you didn't know by this time, after all the schooling you have had, that in good society nobody knows of anything that doesn't smell nice. The highest of them do all that themselves; but as for talking of it, and in the presence of ladies—why it makes them faint. Your mother is of a good family, Tommy; and you get your distinguished appearance from her. And though I did marry a Lightbody first, and after his time an Upmore, I have often been told that my ancestors had a knighthood in their family, which makes it improper for a son of mine, to say anything about soap-boiling. Moreover, I will tell you, as a very great secret, which you must not say a word about in Maiden Lane, what your father was saying in his sleep, the other night. It was the first night we came down here, and the strange bed, and the

kicking noise the sea makes, and the late dinner, and the Welsh rabbit to top up with, perhaps interfered with his natural rest; for he has not told a word of his dreams for years. He thought he was talking to you, my dear, and you were at the top of a ladder, or a tree, so far as I could make out his words. 'Tommy, come down,' he said; 'come down, Tommy; and I'll show you where all the money is put, for you to go into Parliament.' And then I suppose that you wouldn't come down, for he slapped at his leg, where he keeps his money; and he called out louder—'They meddle with me! I'll meddle with them, when it comes to a plum; and let them know who Upmore is. And if I am too old, my son shall do it.' And then he got sore, where he knocked himself; for his hand is heavy, and his veins are large; and he awoke very grumpy, and rubbed his leg; and I could not get any more out of him."

"Why, Bill Chumps is going into Parliament!" I cried, being struck by this strange coincidence; "and I should like to go very much, wherever he is; and Roly Twentifold is sure to go too; and we ought to do something between us, mother, for the good of the country, and all the poor people, and to make things fetch more money. I was reading about a great man, the other day——"

"I don't want to hear about any great men, until you are one of them, Tommy. Go and play on the sands, while I rest for an hour; this air does make me yawn so. Are you sure you have got your dumbbells in your pockets, and your fisherman's lead round the top of your stomach? Then whistle for *Grip*, for there might be Professors down here, for aught we know of. And come back, as soon as the London papers are down, if there is anything about any of us."

In spite of the weight I had now to carry, for fear of going out to sea again, I ran away joyfully down the sands, as they call the gravel where the sand should be. At the ring of the steel-whistle which I carried round my neck, *Grip* came bounding from the Inn to meet me, and with mutual

confidence we began to poke about, for something to afford a hunt. Then I heard a voice holloaing out, "Hi, Tommy!" and with a long stride, quite like that of a man, Sir Roland Twentifold came down to me.

"Why, I thought you had given us the slip," he shouted, for he always spoke as if he wanted every one to hear; "I came down with my pony on Saturday, but I could not see a sign of you. And I did not like to call at the Inn, because of your mother's bad health, you know. And on Sundays, my mother won't let me go far; because she is religious, and so am I. There are so few fellows who care for that now, that I stick up for it, and mean to do so. I won't have everything turned upside down."

"Take care that my *Grip* doesn't roll you over," I exclaimed, for the dog had no muzzle on; "I can't always hold him, when he takes a dislike."

"*Grip*, come here," he said, "and talk to me. I have got a dozen dogs, who could eat you, *Grip*. But if you are good, they shall be good to you."

I could not help laughing at this idea, for *Grip* could thrash any three dogs I knew. But to my astonishment, *Grip* came up, and wagged his tail softly to Sir Roland, and sniffed about him pleasantly, and then offered his grisly ears for a loving rub.

"Don't be nervous, doggy," went on Sir Roland, as if he were talking to an Italian greyhound; "you smell rather doggy; but I don't mind that. If your master goes for a fly every day, and you swim after him, you'll soon be cured."

"Only fancy," I said, as I pulled his tail, that he might not take up with a stranger so; "he had never seen the sea before, any more than I had; but the moment he knew I was in your boat, in he dashed, to come and look after me. And he is not at all a water-dog, as you must know, having such a lot of dogs of your own. He swallowed such a lot of salt water, that he could only gurgle, instead of growling, when the sailors petted him; and I do believe if you had not managed to get hold of his collar, with that long stick, he would have been a drowned dog, the same as I have seen

twenty of together, when the wind blows down the reservoir of the Water-company. Oh, how sad it must be, for their Master and Mistress. If *Grip* was to die, I never should get over it."

"What a soft you are! Why, you are crying now, with *Grip* all alive to lick your face! Such a chap, as you, would never do at Harrow. We should call you 'Fanny,' instead of Tommy Upmore. Now, don't be offended. You can't expect to be anything but a muff, after going to a private school, you know."

"Bill Chumps is not a muff, and he was there six years. If Bill Chumps heard you talk like that, he'd take you by the back of the neck, and throw you over the top of that bathing-waggon."

"I beg your pardon, Tommy," said Sir Roland, whose nature was truly generous; "it was cowardly of me to talk like that, when you can't help yourself, of course. Every fellow should stick up for his own hole. But what Bill Chumps are you talking about? There can't be very many Bill Chumpses, I should think."

"I should rather think not. There is nobody like him. He is gone to Pope's Eye College now, at Oxford, with a scholarship founded by his own father, for the benefit of all descendants. And they say he gets on wonderfully, though everybody cut him, for a week or so."

"Well, what a wonderful thing!" cried Roly, as he told me immediately that I must call him, unless I wanted to get a flyer; "I was at Oxford, last Commemoration-time, to see my cousin, who went up from Harrow, just at the time when Chumps went up. He is two years older than I am, and a decent kind of fellow in his way, but sadly short of what we call *go*; though he belongs to a bigger lot than I do. The Earl of Counterpagne is his name, as the song says about somebody. And your Chumps, everybody calls him Bill Chumps, had pulled him out of Sandford Lasher, at the very last moment to save him from croaking. There were other men there, who were ready to go in; but Chumps was first, and though he was not a great swimmer, in he jumped, and pulled him up,

when he was all but done for. Bad luck for me, as some people would say; but splendid luck, as I think; for I don't want to go into the House of Lords; and what's the good of your own way, unless you make it?"

"That was just like Bill," I said; "he never stopped to think, unless there was lots of time for it. He means to be a great man, and he will be too."

"That's the sort of fellow, I should like to be. I have often thought of running away from home, and the land, and the money, and all that stuff, and setting up properly on my own account, with two night-gowns, and six day-shirts. Who can give any cuds to a fellow, who starts with a heap of money round his neck? If it were not for my mother, and little Laura, I would have started long ago. Whatever I do, I shall get no credit, because of what those dirty Radicals call my 'enormous social advantages.' By the bye, I do hope you're not a Radical, Tommy."

"I should rather hope not," I said, with grand contempt. "My father is a Conservative; and so am I. Though I don't pretend yet to know so very much about it."

"All the better for that. I will teach you," cried Sir Roland. "I know all about it, ever since I can remember. And when my cousin went to call upon Bill Chumps, as he was bound to do after that, the first thing he saw was a great card stuck in the corner of the glass above his chimney-piece, with a baron of beef, and a haunch of mutton, trimmed with ribbons at the top, and then 'W. Chumps, butcher,' in big letters, and a great lot more about meat below, ending with 'House-lamb, when in season.' My cousin was surprised, but of course he said nothing about it, until he knew Chumps well. And then he asked him why; and Chumps said—'just to see whether you were a snob, or not.' And now I tell you, Tommy, that my cousin just opens his door, and shows out any swell, who pretends to patronise his friend, Bill Chumps. But Chumps keeps his distance, and does not want them."

"Well, I wonder I never heard anything about it. If butcher Chumps had heard of it, wouldn't he talk?"

"I don't suppose Chumps ever said a word about it. He is just that sort of fellow, as they say. They wanted to get him a medal; but he would not hear of it, at any price. I shall make his acquaintance, when I go up; and I intend to get him into Parliament. And you too, Tommy, as soon as you are old enough. Only you must try to grow a bit. You are to come, and stop at our place, when the Admiral goes back to London."

CHAPTER XII.
TWENTIFOLD TOWERS.

Although I had seen the Tower of London,—when our van went to a wharf close by,—and even the new City prison, and several magnificent houses built by brewers, all these were nothing but dirt in my eyes, when they lit upon "Twentifold Towers." This grand building was too long for a far-sighted man to see it all at once, and too high for me to think of flying over it, and the depth that it went to, below the ground, was enough to make one giddy. And the number of servants, and the way they did things, and the little they thought about money, was amazing.

But in spite of all this, I was sad in my heart to stop behind, even in so grand a place, when my father and mother were gone back home. For I thought of all the corners that I knew so well, and the places in the cinders, where the wind blew warm, and the holes where you might roast a big potato, (if you watched the proper time for clinkering,) and the grassy remainders of great green fields, where the lark, after warbling in the sky so long, shut both his wings, and shot down in silence, to run about, and feel the land, where he felt that he had been an egg. And then I thought of several fellows, by no means grand in trousers, or in manners—such as Joe Grimes, the blacksmith's boy, and Charley Turps, son of the carpenter—who could enter into my views, and let me into theirs, without a bit of language wasted, and who had forgiven me by this time, for being what they called a "Latin Tea-kettle;" and of whom, by this time, there could not be one, without a long tale of his own to unfold, and a long one of mine to feel for. Moreover, I am not ashamed to own—for the true shame ought to be upon the other side—that fat Polly Windsor had promised now, for more than five years, to be my bride; and I wanted to amaze her with a true account of the things I saw

the girls do down here. And as I thought of all these delights, I did not care twopence to be a great man, if my greatness would rob me of half of them.

But before going further, I am bound to stop, and do justice to a man, who was not so very great—any more than I shall ever be—but that which is tenfold rarer now, a truthful, honest, and courageous man.

It was not the loss of two Sunday hats, which changed my father's politics, but the running away of the man who stole them, without leaving his name in the lining. My father began to look beneath the surface, having taken all he heard on trust, till now; and as soon as he hit upon facts, he found that he must not find fault with this man, for running. For now, he was enabled to perceive that the essence of the Liberal is—to run. To run with the current of opinion first, judging from the froth which way it goes; and to run away from his own principles next, because they are bad, while his conscience still is good; to run, with all speed, from the voice of reason; and above all to put his best foot foremost, in running for his pocket from the enemies of England.

Having set his mind, and heart, against that style of going, my father discovered that his own life grew more honest, and open, in little dealings, from a firmer standard in larger ones. And though he was here, to some extent, with a view to smooth the way for a Government contract, and test the true value of Billy Barlow's tricks; the sterling weight of his principles never fell into the scale of his interests.

"How Tommy may turn out, is more than I can say," he exclaimed, after reading Lady Twentifold's letter, in which she apologised most gracefully, for the liberty she had been tempted to take, in begging them to spare their dear bright boy, for a few days' visit at the Towers, though she had been prevented by absence from calling upon Admiral, and Mrs. Upmore; but her dear son, Roland, who would bring this note, would explain that she had only just been told of their sudden return to London, etc., etc., all most pleasing, and put in the kindest and prettiest way—"whether Tommy will stick to the business," said father, "and make

it pay better than his poor governor—as he calls me, when my back is turned—and be able, by the time he is fifty years old, to pay his way into Parliament, and represent the boiling interest, which is abominably treated there—it lies in the doom of the future to bring forth. But after all the years, I have lived in the world, although I have only been on committees, and never more than vice-chairman, I know too well what Statesmen are. If they can fish up, against one another, so much as the passing of a bad penny-piece, when they were at school together, the man at the top of the tree will never hear the last of it. If our Tommy goes on, as his schooling shows, he may happen to be heard of by and by, though there's nothing wonderful about him yet, except these lies about his flying; and none the Rads, if he turns out a Tory, and none of the Tories, if he turns into a Rad, shall ever be able to say of him then, that he started under false colours. Hand me one of my invoice-slips; there are three, or four, over in that pocket-book. I'll be as straight-forward as Bill Chumps was, with the Earl, according to Tommy's tale."

"Oh, what are you going to do?" cried mother; "after all the lecture I gave Tommy, and all I have done on the sands, oh dear! It is flying in the face of Providence."

"The Lord—if you mean Him by 'Providence'—loves the men He has made, to tell the truth; and the women likewise, to the extent of their powers, though not so much insisted on. Sir Roland is gone to the beach with his pony, to wait for your answer, I believe. Tommy shall take it down to him. Read it as you go, my son, and then put it in this envelope."

What I had to read, and deliver, to my affable, yet rather arrogant friend, ran as nearly as may be to this effect:

"Bucephalus Upmore, Son and Successor to the late S. Upmore, of the old-established Boiling and Refining Works, etc., etc.," in large type; and then in good round hand this—"presents his respects to Lady Towers-Twentifold, and begs to thank her, on behalf of self and wife, for your kind invitation to our son, Thomas. The same is a good boy, and well brought up, so far as can be seen to; and his schoolmaster ready to

answer for him, and will never do any disgrace to the business, unless he gets into bad company. But from experience of the world, B. U. expects to hear no more from your ladyship, as soon as she knows all about our Tommy. He can't fly, no more than his father can, and he goes from Happystowe by Railway-bus, as soon as all of us has had our dinner, which was a great mistake in coming down, to start with breakfast only. Offering your ladyship all good wishes, from a happy stay here at Happystowe, remain your obedient servant to command, Bucephalus Upmore, of address above."

Now, it went very much against my grain, to deliver this letter to my friend Roly—for my friend I may call him, by this time, after the things we had done, and enjoyed, together. For I had taught him several ingenuities, such as a London boy can show, of clogging the wheels of the bathing-waggons, and pouring a little tar into the shoes left on the beach by paddlers, and other devices even better; so that we had made rare larks together, and he would find it dull without me.

"All up now," I cried, as he came, at full gallop, for his answer; "the governor has done for all my chance of ever going up to your place. Look what he says! And not half of it is true. We are boilers; but we don't make dips like that."

Sir Roland was looking at a bunch of rushlights, very well done, but much older than I was—for night-lights had long superseded them—and he could not help laughing, though he tried severely. And I had talked rather largely about commerce, once or twice, when we got into abstract subjects, as we used, when the last chance of a lark was gone. "He has done it on purpose," I said, "to pull me down. Why, he might have used his new bill-heading, quite like a picture you can look at, with a palm in the middle, and an olive full of oil, and two great cannons made into candlesticks, for his Virgin-honey patent that burns like bees, and land-steam on one side, and sea-steam on the other, to show the extent of his transactions. Tell my dear lady, that wretched old thing came down, I am sure, from my grandfather. Oh, what was mother about, to let him?"

"Admirals are wilful men," replied Sir Roland, seriously regarding that vile bill-head; "and they won't always listen to their wives."

"Did I ever call him an Admiral? Did he ever say he was an Admiral? Did any of us ever tell a single lie, about it?"

"Tommy, my boy, don't be excited," Sir Roland said, as gravely as he could contrive; "I have seen a great deal of the world, though I am young; and of course I was aware, from the very first moment, that you belonged to the commercial classes; which (as I read the other day) are rapidly becoming the mainstay of England, against the wild inrush of anarchy. You know, I told you that, the other night, after we had cut the mooring-ropes of the three machines of the Radical. Very well, if you are in trade, where is the difference between big and little? The retail dealers are the loftier class, because they make less profit. I have thought about these things, for several hours, and I am not misled by what I read. And the conclusion I have come to is just this—that the retail man is of a higher class, in every way, than the wholesale one."

"But," I said, as firmly as I could say it, and proudly repressing all tendency to tears, "we are wholesale, wholesale all over. Even father can't say less than that, when he wants to run down all of us, to keep our ideas from spending."

"Never mind, Tommy, what you are," Sir Roland replied, as he buttoned up his coat; "you may be a gentleman, in any calling, if you don't run other people down. That is the surest sign of a cad; and I've never seen any sign of that, in you. Now, I must be off, like the wind, for home; because I am resolved to come back in time for you. We shall want you, all the more for this, friend Tommy."

"I won't come now, if you ask me;" I called out, as he stuck his legs round his pony; "because I shall know, you are thinking about the dips."

"Keep out your things from the rest, and have them ready. The Station-bus goes at two o'clock. I shall come with a light trap, at half-past one; and nobody will ask you about coming."

By this he meant, that I should have to come *nolens volens*, as we said at school; but having more faith in my father's knowledge of the world, I did not expect it. However, with mother's consent, my clothes and books were packed in my own little box, while father laughed, and said, "Please yourselves; so long as they go safe to Maiden Lane." But soon he was obliged to confess his mistake, and let mother triumph over him. For while the bus was standing at the door, and our luggage was going down heavily, and my father, in the window, was taking his last look at a great ship in the distance, a quick light sound of wheels came up the staircase; and running out that way, I saw a horse with his forehead pulled up right against the forehead of the bus-horse, as if they were playing at "conquerors." The new horse was beautiful, and full of pride; and the bus-horse looked at him, with mild reproach, between his shabby blinkers, as if he were saying—"Wait till you grow old, and you won't come flustering a poor horse-brother, with your dash, and frippery, and self-conceit."

"This for you, ma'am!" cried the Boots to my mother, running up as if he had no breath left, from the labour and peril of our boxes, "and young Master Roland, ma'am,—please, ma'am, his compliments, and he is waiting for Master Tommy, ma'am."

"Most polite, and most kind of her ladyship indeed! Bucephalus, what do you say to that? Which of us understands good society best; if you please, my dear, if you please to answer me? What did I tell you, on Monday week, Tommy, about what had been in my family? It requires that kind of preparation, to understand these things, my dear. But he can't go, with less than a guinea in his pocket. Pull out, Mr. Upmore."

My father was obliged to do all that, except that he took five per cent., as the style of the age is, from the beauty of the guinea; and dear mother, (bearing a tear of pride in one eye, and a bigger one of sorrow in the other) went to the bag that her purse was locked in, and got out half a sovereign, and looked at it.

"Don't change it, Tommy," she said, "until you don't know at all how to help it. You are going to be with great people, my pet, and you will have to do things handsomely. But they won't expect a little boy, like you, to stand treat, or tip the maids, or anything of that sort; and if you bring this back to me, you shall have it all to go to school with."

Thus, with more money than I ever had before, or ever could have dreamed of owning, I sat by the side of Sir Roland Towers-Twentifold, and watched him drive his horse, which he did, as he did everything, with the greatest vigour, and capacity. We seemed to go as fast as I could fly—with science, and a strong breeze after me—and *Grip* had to use all his legs to keep up; and I looked back sadly at the poor old bus, with father, and his German pipe, upon the box, and mother with her handkerchief waving from the window; and Roly would not stop, for me to say another word to them.

Now, I need not have told all this, except for the mean charge brought against me, that I got into Twentifold Towers, and thence into public life, by trickery, by false pretences, and imposture on the part of all of us, having conspired among strangers to present my father as an Admiral —"The Admiral of the Fleet-ditch" those unprincipled jokers have dared to call him, because the old Fleet-stream comes down our valley. Possibly, if the general public (and especially the Inn) at Happystowe had not endowed my father with that Naval rank, and therein confirmed him (in spite of all protest), I might not have got my first invitation, which he cast away like a true Briton. But I leave the world at large, to judge the merits; for I have always found it waste of time to reason with malicious persons.

Have I patience to think of such small fry, when I speak of the greatness of everything at Twentifold Towers, and for miles around? Not a cold, rigid, and stuck-up greatness, such as you must fold your arms to look at, and thank the Lord, in private, that you are not like it; but a warmth of beauty and of kindness shed abroad, which set me on the flutter, when I came to feel it; though my mother had provided me with fifteen pounds

of lead, in the hollow at the bottom of my chest. But, at first I was frightened, as you may suppose, and kept asking myself what good would be my best clothes, even to play in, at such a place? Then Lady Twentifold came out, and kissed me, and looked at the tears in my eyes with love—because she had lost a little boy like me—and my heart went to her, so that I saw nothing of the height or size of anything, so long as I could see her, and think about her, and feel how good she was to me.

"You will see a great friend, by and by," she said. "What a distinguished boy you are, to have formed such lofty friendships! And chiefly because of your bodily gift of weighing less than you ought to weigh. Why, a boy, with the mind of a Shakespeare to come, might pour forth poem after poem, and nobody care to inquire into him. Even Professor Megalow, universal as he is, might never even chance to hear of him."

"Oh, is it Professor Megalow?" I asked, with glad excitement. "I am not afraid of any place, when I know that he is near it."

"Ariel, how unkind of you! If we ill-treat you, spread your wings. But I have not even seen your great friend yet. He will not be here, till dinner-time. He is carving, what he cares for more than anything we can offer—a poor dead whale at Crowton Naze."

Now, behold the reward of virtue—for in the present state of this wicked world, it may be taken as a high reward to escape the pains of punishment! If I had gone, as an Admiral's son, to Twentifold Towers, how should I have looked, when Professor Megalow, knowing all about us, and having smelled our works afar—which probably helped to draw him towards us, for congenial nutriment—now came up, with that large sweet smile, which spreads all over his face and body, and said, "My dear little friend, how are you?"

This was the first time I ever beheld him in evening dress, and he astonished me; because a very old hat had always been part of his equipment. He may have contrived to leave it somewhere, for he cannot have come with a good one. Neither was that the only thing in his

present appearance amazing; for he had put himself into a black velvet coat, as the smartest thing he could find in his trunk; and grand, I can tell you, he looked in it. From daybreak until he had to go and wash, he had been at work at that great whale, not only directing a mob of clod-hoppers, how to hop about upon a whale, but also, with his own iron arms, performing all work that called for skill and strength. And yet, there was no sign of work about him; neither any talk, or thought of work; and he would not be made (though Lady Twentifold tried her best to make him, and so did Sir Roland with downright "fishers"—as we used to call tapping a master at school, to do a hard sentence for us), by no manner of means could he be brought to speak, as if he wanted to be listened to.

This was the very thing that I had known, ever since he first came, with the other four Professors. Of them there was not one that would leave off talking, for the sake of the public, or of one another, or even for his own sake; neither would they breathe enough, to let another voice in; but the measure of every man's mind was his lungs. And to countervail this, it has been laid down by nature, that the men who have something to say don't say it.

But, though this Professor, in his leisure time, would play round the edge of his learning, rather than plunge other people into it; it was quite impossible for even me (a careless, and light-headed boy) to be with him, without learning something. And my firm belief is, that although I know very little, at this time of writing, whatever I have learned of larger things than little human creatures, was gained upon that whale, where the great mind came to study the great body.

CHAPTER XIII.
WHALEBONES.

My dear mother always says, and allows no contradiction about it, that this whale, being all bones and blubber, had no right whatever to come ashore there, and to set me against my father's trade. She declares that all science is full of smells, a thousand times worse than we make; and that all their fuss about drains is just, that they may get themselves cleaned up, for nothing. All the people before her, in generation, lived to be ninety, without any drain upon them; except her own parents, and why did they die? Why, because there was a drain carried through their garden; and the smell came in, and choked them!

In support of this view, there is much to be said; and according to my own experience, ten people are killed, by the making and opening of drains, for one who can hope in his lungs, that he breathes better air when near them. Nature has designed the human race, to stand well apart on the face of the earth, and not huddle up in hillocks, as the emmets do; and their certainty of fighting, when they get too thick, shows this, without further argument. And another thing that proves it, is the fact, that when they clot together, they make drains; which destroy everybody who is fond of them. My father was as well as any man could be, till what they call "sanitary engineering" broke his constitution; and the lively smells, that our works had scattered, were bottled into deadly poison.

As yet, I was too young to understand such matters, or even to give a thought to them; but the standing I took upon that whale, and the pleasure with which I went into him, did a great deal for me, in the good opinion (than which there could be no better one) of the kind Professor Megalow. Roly would not come anigh our operations, after one experiment, and a short one; but I, with my quickness and lightness of

tread, was of some little service, I do believe, in the cause of harmless science. I learned all the names of the Professor's tools, and could bring them to him, without wanting any ladder; and any little cut, that could be made without much strength, I could make under his direction, while he was at the bigger work. He did not attempt to get all the skeleton, greatly as he longed to do so; for this was no whale to be found every day, but one who had no business here; and his name was something like chocolate. The Professor sighed heavily; as his bones grew more, and more, attractive, and hung over us, like a great arbour drooped with a fine lot of creepers; but he knew, long since, what it is to depend, for money, upon the Government. Lucky would he be, to get the head, and fins, and tail, and some odds and ends, if a dozen rival claimants would let him have so much.

"That whale is mine," said Lady Twentifold; "he chose to land on my property, and I give him to Professor Megalow; not to the Government, that won't pay a penny, but to the Professor, to put in his own garden."

"That whale belongs to me," said the local receiver of the droits of the Admiralty; "the foreshore is vested in the Crown, and the Admiralty represents the Crown."

"Clearly, there can be no question," said the man, who represented the Trinity House, "that the whale is ours; and we mean to have him."

Then there came a lawyer, employed by the crew of the boat who had first harpooned him; and another retained by the men who stuck him last; and another by a captain who had espied him go down; and another by a fisherman who headed him ashore; and one by the Coast-guard, who had seen him stranded first; and two by a man who had foretold the weather, and kept his ropes ready, though he never had to use them. But, in spite of all these claims, the men who got him, or at least got all the best of him, were the men who made no claim at all; but came down, with carts and casks, and helped themselves.

For my part, I thought it not only unjust, but stupid, that I should work so hard, and establish a right, as the Professor said, to a very considerable share of blubber, and my father not get a pailful! I wrote to him, beginning with a line of Latin—not so much to accredit my learning, as to make him pay proper attention,—and after that, I said that here there was any quantity of stuff, such as he could never get, for love or money, (unadulterated), and it was to be had, for the asking; or rather for taking, without asking. I told him, how it shone in the sun, and held together, and took different colours as you looked at it; and I was sure that he would make his fortune; because he could get it for nothing, and make it mix up into everything. And I was certain of stirring him up, and getting five shillings, by return of post, when I added—"Everybody says that Mr. Barlow, of Happystowe candle-works, will make a thousand pounds, out of this poor whale, that is being cut up by me, and Professor Megalow."

My mother was kind enough to answer; but without any sort of reference to business. My father took no more notice of my letter, than if I had sent him a bark of *Grip's*, instead of a pill-box, filled with sample from my own knife, at a place where the blubber was more than fourteen inches thick. And this goes some way to prove, that his mind was already on the rise above the smaller details, and getting into larger views of lofty subjects, such as chemical researches, political œconomy, and even Government contracts. And it turned out afterwards, as you will see, that he was right in attending to these wholesale sizes.

Dear mother sent me half a crown in stamps, for fear of my changing the half-sovereign, and related a beautiful dream she had enjoyed, about me, and Professor Megalow, standing on the whale, with our wings spread out. "She knew, from all the pictures, what a whale was like, and hoped (for the sake of my new overcoat) I kept out of the way, when he spouted. And, if I could bring a piece of genuine bone, for the sake of her stays, it would be such a comfort, for everything now was adulterated; and their want of spring ran into her. And then, she added, that she did not think I had better write a line to Polly Windsor (though she sent me

a message from Polly, to say that I ought to have done it long ago), because it was not so well to go too far, and create expectations, which might come to nothing. Her own opinion was, that after my last fly, and the high society it led to, there was no telling what might be before me, in the family way, and otherwise. But above all, she begged me, for her dear sake, not to trust to the grand dinners I got here, and their turtle and their venison, and their Aspic jelly, but to keep the tongue of the buckle of my lead-belt in the third hole from the end; for, if the wind took me, out over the sea, what could Lady Twentifold, and the whale, and even the great Professor do?"

I was quite content to save fingers from pen, in the direction of Polly Windsor. Polly was very well in her way; when she chose to be pleased, and look pretty. Moreover, she was a very well-grown girl, with broad shoulders, and big arms, and long brown hair, and her feet so truly a pair, that she never could tell her right shoe from her left. And from her mother she had inherited so much strength of dignity, that, if I went to kiss her, when the mood was not in liking, or if she saw me trying it with any of her enemies, she would take me up with one hand, and lay me on the cinders. But I must not say too much of that; or Sir William Chumps will be down upon me.

We had promised to marry one another; ever since she had her first pink slips, and I went into trousers; but I never vowed not to speak to any other girl, nor to let her box my ears, and say "thank you, dear;" as she seemed to believe that I had done. And surely, it is no great reproach upon me, that now, in this busy time, I never thought about her, unless I got something very good to suck, and wished that she were there to have a bit. For it must be understood, that Professor Megalow, could not do a good stroke of work without me, according to the very best of my belief; and as he was lodging at Crowton Naze, which was more than three miles from the Towers, and as he must get to work, the moment that the sunlight came over the sea into the wattles of the whale, there was no help for it, but that I must be up, by the crow of a cock, who lived under my window; for not a serving man, or ruling woman, at the Towers,

would take sixpence a day, to get up so soon. Sir Roland called me a confounded fool, and said that I came there to play, and not to work; and even Lady Twentifold was vexed with me. But, like everybody else, she fell under the enchantment of the Professor's eyes, and smile. And I did hear my lady's favourite maid declaring to her cousin, who had to make my bed, that "you should have seen my lady's face, when she was told, by a friend who pretended to know all about him, that the Professor had been married, for several years."

At any rate, he worked as hard, as if he had a large small family to keep; and I was told afterwards, and can well believe (because he was under the Government) that he would have been paid, more than twice as much, if he had done less than half the work. But neither of us gave a thought to that. Our object was to walk off with the whale, or so much of him as was moveable; before the twelve lawyers, who were hard at work, could get an order from the Courts, to stop us. And luckily, this was the season of the year, when the law (like a Python) retires for three months, to digest its swallowings. Moreover, when a boat's crew of people, (who care for the law, about as much as science does) that is to say, blunt fishermen came with intention of landing at high water, and storming the whale, who was well drawn up,—even the Professor could not have stopped them (though Lady Twentifold's bailiff was there, to back him up, through thick and thin), if once those fellows could have landed. By saying to *Grip* "have a care, my boy," I was able to do a good turn to our cause; for he knew a gun better than I did, and feared no other thing on earth, but that. One look into the boat convinced him that these rogues had got no fire-arms; and as soon as he had knocked over two, who desired to land, the rest held parley.

"Our coast-guard will be withdrawn, next week," the Professor assured them, in his kind and solid way; and whether they misunderstood his meaning, and believed the Preventive men to be in possession, or whether they were glad of some good reason for withdrawal; at any rate they withdrew as promptly, as every one of English race does now, when it might prove troublesome to go on. Moreover, they showed a grand

contempt for us; which the mere act of running away exhibits. And in all probability they were wise; for *Grip* had struck back upon ancestral qualities, as some few Englishmen do, even yet. By slow, and solid holding of his own, he had thrashed all the Twentifold Tower dogs, every one of whom was to have eaten him; and now he was living on whalebone, and every muscle was as hard as wire. If mental analogy counts for aught, against low physical resemblance, *Grip* was far more akin to the English race, than the present generation is.

The Professor was delighted with all these works; and, as soon as we had finished, and packed up the results, he laid his hand upon my head. Upon his own, he had a velvet cap; and the whole of his face was one sweet smile.

"Tommy," he said, looking steadfastly at me, and swinging a little from side to side, for he always stood with his head well back, and his heels a trifle forward; "what a help you have been, my dear little Tommy—a truly strongsiding champion! Now, before I go, to see your good works stowed away in our dark recesses, tell me what I can do for you, to show the gratitude of the nation." He was fond of talking in this style, making small things great, and great things small.

"If you please, sir," I said, after thinking awhile, for I believed that he could do anything; "I should be so glad, if you could stop me, from having to go up in the air so."

Professor Megalow's bright smile changed into a smile of sadness. He began to rub his well-established nose, in the fork of his finger and thumb; and then he whistled, and put his hands into his trouser pockets.

"Oh yes, sir, you can, if you like;" I said, taking hold of one thumb, which he had left out; "there is nothing of the things that can be done, that you can't do, when you like, sir. I only want to be able to take off this lead, that makes me blue all round, and to leave these heavy things behind; and get to feel the ground under my feet go firm; as it seems to do, with

everybody else but me. I have longed so often to ask you, sir; but I did not like, until you asked me. Oh, Sir Megalo-micro-sauros, do try to help me, if I have helped you."

He had told me to call him "Micro-sauros" once, when I stuck fast with his proper name,—"for our origin now is established, my Tommy; and yet, we may modify our pedigrees. My proclivities show me to be devolved, in a very degenerate, and underfed form, from the mighty race of Saurians." And as cause, and effect, interlace each other, he spent his life, in dissecting his ancestors.

"Thomas," he said now, for whenever he spoke in a very solid vein, he called me that; "Thomas, my boy, be contented with that, which has been ordained concerning you. Yours is not the only instance of what our friends call *Meiocatobarysm*; the meaning of which you have Greek enough now, as well as experience enough to know. The form of life, in which you find yourself, is perhaps the happiest among all, with which we are as yet acquainted—to wit, that of an English boy, of the middle class, well-fed, well-taught, well-played (if I may be allowed the expression), dressed, quite as well as he cares to be, and walking about at his leisure, with an eye down the manifold vistas of mischief. In a few years, Thomas will have changed all that. He will find himself bound to pay rates, and taxes, and never know when he has paid them right; to go to his office, with a compressor on his head, and measure his words, like poison; to doubt his very oldest friends, and be hearty with people he can't bear the sight of; and to go home at night, with the certainty that one run of bad luck may ruin him. Thomas, be happy while you can."

"But, sir," I answered; "how can I be happy, when everybody expects me to go up? No one else, in the world, is expected to go up; because he couldn't do it, if he tried. And I can't go up, more than once in a way; even if my mother would allow me. And yet, I am always getting blamed, by a number of people, for not going up. Even Roly is down upon me now, to do it; and because I won't try, but keep working at the whale, he seems to be getting tired of me."

"Tommy, that is sad; and yet a natural result. To my far less remarkable self, it has happened; when kind friends expected me to rise too fast. Reserve yourself, Tommy; and preserve your self-respect. But would you be really glad, my boy, to lose this special gift of yours? Remember, that if you do, you cease to attract any public attention—doubtful benefit as that may be. Do you really wish, to be unable to pirouette in the air again?"

Professor Megalow, in the kindest manner, put both hands on my shoulders, and fixed his very large clear eyes on mine. It was hopeless for any one, looked at thus, to tell a lie; neither was my nature that.

"If you please, sir," I said, "there is nothing I like better, than to be taken for a wonder of the world, and to read a whole column in the Newspapers about me, beginning with 'Unparalleled phenomenon.' But what I can't bear is, to be always bothered to do it, for people to look at; and to be laughed at, as if I were a rogue, or else a curmudgeon, when I don't go up, to order. Sometimes, I have been tempted to pull my weights off—but I promised my mother, that I never would do that. And you know, sir, that I can only go up, now and then; and always, when I don't want to do it. And when I come down again, I am so stupid; and my head goes round, for hours."

"The natural result of anything counter to the ordinary laws of earth. Have you anything more to explain, concerning your wishes, so far as you know them?"

"No, sir, except that I should like once, to go up, if it was only as high as his hat, when my father was there, to see me do it. Because he is so cock-sure that I can't do it; and he calls it nothing but a pack of lies. And, somehow or other, I assure you, sir, I am just like a lump of lead, when father is looking at me."

"A common complaint of the *Mediums*, Tommy, of the effect incredulity has on them. But, my dear little anthropic nautilus, I can do nothing, either to make, or mar your excursions over my own head. As I have told

you before, there is nothing exceptional in your formation; only it happens, that your bodily contour is exactly such as to promote the tendencies of your specific levity. Do you understand me, noble volant?"

"Well, sir, I think that I do a little; but not very clearly, until I get older. Bodily contour means the turning of my body, when I go up; doesn't it?"

"No, Tommy, no. It means physical outline; if that is any clearer to you. You give me a lesson in lucidity, as the cant of the day calls clearness. To put what I mean, into the vulgar tongue—which is the least vulgar of all just now—your outward shape is especially fitted, to help the lightness of your material, in conquering the power of gravitation. Your chest is very large, and can be much expanded; your head is rather small, and of little substance, but endowed with a mass of curls, which take the wind, like a mop being trundled; your feet are very hollow and receive the air; and the palms of your hands are concave. Above all, your stomach, my dear little friend, or rather your hypogastrium, has a curve, which requires continual attention, in the way of aliment. If neglected, this lends itself at once to inferior pressure. But with all these qualifications, Tommy, you might defy the breezes, if you only had a stable mind, and bones a little more like mine."

The Professor had goodly bones of his own, as behoves a great osteologist; whereas mine are very small, and slight, and it takes some time to find them. But I saw no way to increase their size; and before I could ask, if such there were, Sir Roland came cantering up, and behind him appeared his mother, in a pony-carriage, together with her lovely child, Miss Laura.

"Oh, how we shall miss you!" exclaimed my dear lady—as I was allowed to call her—"Professor Megalow, if I establish my right to the residue of that whale, I shall have it preserved, and a gallery made, in gratitude for all that we have learned from you."

"I heartily hope that you will," he replied, gracefully lifting his velvet cap, as he always did at a compliment; "then there will be some excuse, for me to come down, and have another carve at him."

"Professor," cried Sir Roland, who was always wanting something; "there is one thing that you must do, before you go, for the finishing touch to our gratitude. You must send Tommy up, in this nice quiet reach, without any fellow here to shoot at him; and we'll tie this kite-string to his belt, after we have taken the lead out; to make sure of his not drifting out to sea."

"Tommy, and I, are very warm allies," my great friend answered gravely; "and unless you behave most respectfully to him, I shall tie the kite-string to you, and with her ladyship's permission, send up you."

That was a very fine moment for me, who have been compelled by my peculiar case, to keep such a sharp look-out, what all the people around me are thinking of. In every condition of things, even my best friends have always considered it a nice little piece of excitement, and a pleasure entirely due to them, that I should go up, and encounter all risk, while they remained below, with the heartiest wishes for my safe deliverance.

Sir Roland Towers-Twentifold looked at the Professor, as if to say, at first, "You could not do it, if you tried." The Professor regarded him, with earnest sadness, as much as to say—"Don't make me try; because it might be so bad for you." Then Roly, in doubt and alarm, glanced towards his mother; who had said that he knew no fear. Her eyes were saddened with a gleam of tears, for she had long made up her mind, that the great Professor could do anything permitted by the laws of England. Yet honour, and fine sentiment, forbade her to forbid, that her son should do a thing, which he had urged a friend to do. The wise man enjoyed the situation for a moment; then perceived that it was painful to kind and good friends, and at once relieved them.

"I withdraw my proposal, which was rashly made;" he said to Lady Twentifold, with that wonderful mixture of nod and wink, which had neither nod in it, nor wink, perceptible, and yet conveyed the force of both; "I am truly glad, that I did not give your dauntless son time to accept my offer. Perhaps it would have puzzled me, if he had. Especially as my train will be due in an hour, and the drive to the Station takes forty minutes. Is there any gratitude, in the sons of men? If there be, how little time have I left to express it—and yet the wisest plan; for no length of time would suffice me!"

He lifted her white hand to his lips, in the gallant manner, which became him well; and my dear lady bowed over it, and turned to her carriage, with a little sigh, which conveyed to the ponies—if they understood their mistress—that it was through no default of hers, that they never would be guided by a strong male hand.

CHAPTER XIV.
A SILLY PAIR.

I have often been taunted, by people who know nothing (multiplied into a million fibs) about me, that my mind is as volatile as my body, and goes about, in an unsettled manner, for want of the leaden belt, which motherly care so long kept round my stomach. It is equally needless, and useless, to present reason to such irrationals; and I try to be proud, in my loftier moments, of affording them amusement, which amuses me.

But, to reasonable persons, who can hearken to a thing, and take it into common sense, and weigh it—whenever it concerns their own affairs enough—to these (if any) I would simply say, "follow my own history of my own acts, and judge, by my own account, of what nobody else can know so well." And any one, proceeding upon this fair principle, will find more to approve than to condemn in me, however much I may tell against myself.

Hoping that fair-play will prevail—as it generally does in the end—I confess, that at this very tender age of fifteen, I proved for the rest of my holidays, untrue to the image of Polly Windsor. Polly was not there; and even if she had been, how would she have looked, I should like to know, by the side of Laura Twentifold? She was double her size, that is certain at the least; but in quality, oh what a difference! And yet again, manners, and the fear of what I might say greatly against my own interest, enable me to speak in a chastened style; and to do that, I had better leave Polly still absent.

On the very day after Professor Megalow returned to his duties in London, my dear lady comforted her mind, by returning to the place still full of him. You must understand, that the Professor had never been actually staying at the Towers; because, without any other fullgrown gentleman dwelling in the house, it might have looked amiss. So he had

his own camping place at Crowton-on-the-Naze, which is ten miles further up the coast than the rising watering-place, called Happystowe. Yet there had not been many days, when he failed to put himself into spruce attire—so far as his nature permitted—and to dine, and make a pleasant evening, with my lady, and her gallant son, Sir Roland. And when he was gone, it could not be helped, that the evenings should grow long, and dull.

It must have been August, and about the middle of it (according to our holidays, which were sadly near their end), when my dear Lady walked down the sands, to talk to an ancient fisherman, about keeping the relics of the whale upright. Roly was gone, with the Keeper, inland, to see about exercising some young dogs, in preparation for the shooting-time; and the lovely little lady, and myself, were left, to look for pretty shells, and to amuse each other. And I never grew tired of obeying her commands; so sweet was her voice, and so gentle were her eyes.

"Now I want to show all these," she said, "to my darling Dorothea, that she may choose exactly what she likes; and it is high time to put her necklace on, that you have made so beautifully, Ariel."

She always called me "Ariel;" because she had heard her mother do it, once or twice, and she said it was so much prettier than "Tommy." And although she was more than ten years old, she had not outgrown the wholesome joy of a little woman in her baby-doll. Dorothea, moreover, was quite young at present, and sweetly instructive in the newest fashions, having only come two days ago from Paris, with the kind introduction of Professor Megalow.

"You may sit down quite close to dear Dorothea; because you are not clumsy and rough, like Roly; who cannot at all enter into the feelings of a lovely and delicate creature, like this. And, Ariel, I am quite sure that Dolly will like you, as soon as she opens her eyes, which are shut now—you must understand—from the sea-air being too much for her. But you must let me put her necklace on, although you have made it so

beautifully; not that I would not trust you to do it, but because you cannot understand her hair. It would hardly be proper, if you did, you know."

She was always like this, such a sweet little love; so afraid of hurting anybody's feelings, and so ready to think everybody good. When I sat down near her, on a bank of bed-rushes, with the doll sitting carefully between us, I could not help feeling ungrateful in my heart, for the prospect of Miss Polly Windsor to-morrow. And I could not quite fancy that Maiden Lane—though alive with delights of its proper class—could supply such contentment to sight, and thought (not that I put it so grandly then) as the place I sate in, and the things I saw. For the tide was coming in, with pleasant feeling of the air, and ready briskness of the things, that had been waiting for it. At every short step that it made in advance—for the waves toddled in, like babies—there was some pretty thing, starting up in front, to run, and to glisten before it. But the prettiest thing of all sate there by me.

"You are always at work," she said, "always doing something. Why do people want us to be educated so? Those funny letters are all Greek, I know; because Roly has got some that he learns at Harrow. But he doesn't seem to like it, more than I like French; and he puts it in a cupboard, for the holidays. Ariel, why should you work more than Roly does? He never does a thing, unless he likes it."

I had thought this out, and my reply was ready. "Roly will be a rich man, and I shall not. He belongs to great people, and I belong to small ones. He will get on all the same, whether he works, or not."

"Then I call that as unfair as anything can be. And I could not have believed it, though I know you tell the truth, unless I had heard of such things before. We all ought to work, to do good, of course; but not in the middle of the holidays."

"I have got to go back to old Rum, on Monday;" I answered, with a wistful gaze at her; "and unless I can say a hundred lines of Homer, beginning at the place where we left off, cracks will be the word, and no mistake. And he's come to be so sharp, from being done so often, that there's not a fellow now with the pluck to run a tib, or a crib, or a leary round the corner. *Ton d' apameibomenos* is the only cock that fights."

"What a lucky thing it is to be a girl!" She cast her eyes down, after looking at me, to learn my opinion of this sentiment; for that opinion showed itself as opposite as could be, to hers. "I only mean because we don't get cracks, and we don't jump on one another, as they do to you sometimes; oh, Ariel, how can you put up with that? And then they tie a string to your toe at night. What courage it must take, to be a boy!"

"Before Bill Chumps went to Oxford," I replied, while looking at the tiny foot, she put forth on the sand; "he shut up all bullying, in our school. There used to be a lot of it; and after getting taw, or togy, in the playground, and rats in school, a fellow couldn't sleep, for fear of cramp. But Bill set up a different fashion altogether; and the little fellows now begin to cock over us, who are their seniors. I am getting bigger than I used to be, and so well up in the school, that I am very useful, in doing the big fellows' exercises. And they never jump on me, as they used to do, when I couldn't try to fly for them. *Grip* would have something to say to them, next morning, if they tried it."

"Oh, I do love *Grip*, because he is so ugly; and I love you, Ariel, because you are so pretty, and so kind, and gentle; and you never do mischief, unless Roly sets you the example. I shall cry, when you go away; I'm sure I shall; and I shall put Dorothea into mourning for you. I don't believe a bit that your papa makes candles; and if he does—how could we go to bed, without them? I should just like to ask people that. And what could they say, I should be glad to know?"

To me this appeared an extremely sensible, and large-minded view of the case, and I did not hesitate to promote it.

"And what would you do without soap, Lady Laura? My father makes soap of the finest quality. A great deal better, as everybody says, than any turned out by Mr. Windsor, though he put his name on every cake —'Windsor's best brown Windsor.' And no better than curds, every square of it."

"Then if I see any of it in my room, I shall throw it straight out of the window, and say 'Please to bring me Ariel's soap.' But you must not call me 'Lady Laura.' My mother is a lady, but I am not; till I marry my cousin, Lord Counterpagne; as they say I shall have to do, when I grow up. But I don't care about him at all, till then. He has got red hair, and his eyes are crooked."

Although it was no concern of mine, this arrangement appeared to me most unfair. But I did not dare to say a word against it.

"Oh, Ariel," my little beauty went on, after taking up her doll, and coaxing it; "can you think of anything so bad, as marrying a person you don't like? Because you can never get away, you know; according to the law of the land, I believe, and according to the Bible. My mother has never said a word about it; but Roly declares that I am bound to do it, and he is always determined to have his own way. Oh, Dorothea, what would you do?"

I knew very little of the world as yet, and in matters above me, I was loth to speak; but I could not help saying—"There is lots of time yet. You may trust me to help you, if you only let me know."

"How stupid I am! I never thought of that;" she turned over towards me, and put up her hands, as if for me to help her; and then suddenly began to stroke my hair, as she had often longed to do, but had hitherto refused my invitation. "I must do it once, before you go, to see how the whole of it is fastened on. Don't be afraid; I won't hurt you, Ariel. I know how Ethel Jones does mine. And if they want to marry me, and I don't like it,

all you will have to do, is this—to get into the train, and come down here, and then take off your lead, and fly away with me, and come back when the ceremony is over."

"But how could they do it, without you?" I asked.

"You musn't expect me to be reasonable always;" she answered, and began to play with me, gently, and beautifully, and laughing all the time.

"What a pair of silly little things you are!" Lady Twentifold came upon us suddenly, while Laura was trying to uncurl my hair, and I was offering to kiss her, but afraid to do it; while she was dodging in and out, to tempt me more; "Ariel, you told me this morning, that unless you learned a hundred lines of Greek to-day, you had better not be born, next Monday. And you asked me to write a letter of apology, to your learned Dr. Rumbelow. He is likely to be our new Bishop, I was told this morning; and it will put Roly down, for he made sure that his Master would receive the offer. So I hope that you will never call him 'Old Rum,' any more."

"Old Rum to be the Bishop, my dear lady!" I cried, as if I had quite lost my place. "And who is to be our master, I should like to know? Oh, I won't learn another line; 'twould be trouble thrown away."

My practical conclusion was borne out by facts—sad facts for all sons of the *Partheneion*. Dr. Rumbelow's luck was a joy to us, at first; because we all liked him, and got off a lot of work. But our joy soon went, and a bad time followed; as we all found out, and pretty quickly too. For the new master's name, was Crankhead, "Ernest Mauleverum Crankhead," M.A., a Cambridge man, and a lofty Wrangler; but without much Greek, as we soon found out.

Now, before I left Twentifold Towers, and returned to the smell of our works,—which had changed very greatly for the worse, while I was away down here,—Sir Roland Towers-Twentifold (being well sixteen, and tall for his age, and of long experience, at one of our largest public schools) took me aside into a saddle-room, wherein he was learning to smoke

cigars, and put into a nutshell all the essence of the British Constitution. How I wish, I could remember what he said! But it sank into my mind, too deeply ever to be brought up again; and it blended with, and flourished in, the flower of my life; as liquid manure reappears in bright flowers, "*inscripti nomina regum*."

"Tommy," he went on, as soon as ever he had put into ten words the lessons of a thousand years, "you will see now, how it is that we don't get on. We never get a man to take the lead, who knows his own mind, and will stick to it, and throw up his situation, rather than carry it on, against his own lights. And then, there come a lot of fellows swarming for first pull, as we rush to the swipes-can after cricket; and the louder any cad is for his rights (which are sure to mean the wrongs of some quieter chap), the surer he is to get served first. Now, can you call this Government?"

"I don't pretend to know much about it," I replied, for we had held some conversation of this kind before; "but my father says, that any business carried on, as the Government of this country is, would have to put its shutters up, within three months, if it started with a hundred thousand pounds. But you mustn't tell any one that he said this; for I believe, by the way he would not answer me, that he has got a fine Government contract, by this time."

"Your father is quite right; he is a man of strong sense;" Sir Roland made answer, as soon as he could, after taking a large puff of smoke the wrong way; "let him get every farthing he can from the Government, and then he will be able to understand them. Why, I might not have got the knowledge that I have, except for a trick that they wanted to play about my cousin Counterpagne, when he comes of age. Counterpagne is soft, and his mother no better; and being of an ancient Tory race, they expected to have things made smooth for them. But I can't stop, to tell you all that now. You are to come back at Christmas, and you shall hear it then. Counterpagne is to marry little Laura, to prevent any mischief to our property, and influence; and between us, we shall send six members up, besides Counterpagne himself in the Peers of course, and me in the

Commons, for the Towers' own hole. But, Tommy, look at me, and tell me this. If under a Government, that calls itself Conservative, as the present fellows do, such things can be done, as I was going to tell you; what is to be expected of the Radicals? I'll tell you what; if the Constitution lasts till I am of age, which seems a most unlikely thing—I shall want you, and every man of sense I know, to collect, and put your shoulders to the wheel. Remember that."

I did not at all understand what he meant, although he had spoken several times to this effect. But I promised to do all I could; and was pleased with the thoughts of becoming so important.

"Tommy, you will rise," my friend continued, without asking what I was thinking of; "such a fellow as you are, must go up, unless he makes a downright fool of himself. You can beat me all to fits, in Greek and Latin, though you have only been at a dirty little private school. You have got a most wonderful face of your own; so easy-going, and sweet-tempered, that it makes every fellow think you slow, and drop all jealousy about you. And more than all,—and that alone should be enough to make your fortune—you can draw the attention of the whole world upon you, whenever you please, by going over their heads. I have been very good, in letting you off, without sending you up, a lot of times. But you know that I have done it upon one condition—you must cultivate the art, without any one's knowledge, and be ready to go up, at some great moment, when I give the signal. Pretend, for the present, that you can't do it; but practise, as I told you, more and more. I have shown you the muscles you must try to strengthen, and the places where you must lay on fat. It is nothing in the world, but a kind of swimming; and there everything depends upon your being quite at home. Now, remember what I say; and when you come down at Christmas, I shall put you through your paces, and expect to find you perfect."

"Oh, Roly," I replied, "you talk as lightly as all the men of science did about me. I will do my very utmost to please you, I am sure. But I never expect to be of any service to you. You are learning to smoke, and your

smoke goes up; and that makes you think that I can do the same."

"Exactly so, Tommy. A great deal of it went down, until I understood it. And now look at that!"

CHAPTER XV.
POLITICAL ŒCONOMY.

By going from home, after so many years, we had not only done ourselves no good—in the opinion of our friends, who could not go—but we had opened the door to a swarm of changes, which came rushing in upon the heels of each other. To me, the greatest change of all appeared to have taken place in Maiden Lane itself; for the houses had turned black, and the windows grimy, and the roadway and the pavement (wherever there was any) seemed to cry aloud for washing, and the people too, unconscious as they were of such desire.

Excitement appeared to be the main thing now, and hurry, and suspicion, and no time to look about; whereas both at Happystowe, and Crowton-on-the-Naze, the chief business of the natives was, to look at one another; and when there was no more to be made of that, to consider the meaning of the sand and sea. And taken on the whole, those folk looked wiser, and a great deal happier than ours did.

But to dwell upon that, would be ungraceful now, when I call to mind that our own boiling, and the agitation of my father's engine had a great deal to do with the ferment around us. No sooner had my father returned to business—with Joe Cowl, and the summons, wiped off his conscience, and Billy Barlow's new devices written in his heart—than he found on his desk, he could never tell how, a sealed invitation to tender for soap, for the heads of all the convicts (with average stated), in six great castles, for the improvement of our race. The consumption of soap, per head was given, and a number of smaller particulars, all in print and proper columns; and then the requirement for samples, to be delivered at six places. And in pencil, very faint upon the margin, there was written, "It must not be soft, and it must be strong. Price not to be too low, like the Rads' stuff. Tallow will be wanted soon. *Rub this out.*" There

was something so touching in this, and so full of fine feeling, as between man and man, that my father immediately filled his pipe, and had a good smoke to consider it. At one time, his heart warmed up with thinking of the goodwill remaining in politics yet, and the loyalty every one is bound to show to, and expect from, his own side. And yet again, he could not feel sure, that he ought to have any faith at all in this. Why should there be six samples sent, of a stone weight each, to six different places, and all to be left without the money? It looked like a hoax, with Joe Cowl at the root of it, to get a paltry laugh at him; or else a swindle, to get three-fourths of a hundredweight of soap, for nothing. He resolved to act warily, and so he did. "If they mean well to me," he said, "they will never examine my samples."

They meant so thoroughly well to him, that they sniffed at his samples, and found them shocking—for he sent the worst stuff he could lay hand on, for fear of having it stolen—and then they gave an order for sixty tons, to be furnished at once, and sixty more to follow. Our works had never sent out such a lot before, at one delivery; and no wonder that they could not think of me.

"John Windsor shall not have a finger in the pie;" my father said right manfully; "I am not at all sure that his politics are sound. He would lower my quality, to get the next himself. You know how he wanted to run away, Sophy, when that great bombardment came. Let every vat stand upon its own bottom."

"Bucephalus, you are quite right," mother answered; "as you always are, when you get on. Work double tides, Bubbly, and double your hands. Don't let them have a penny, if you can help it."

So grand was the commodity thus produced, with the help of the lessons at Happystowe, that it is remembered to the present day, and cited as the type of excellence. For sanitary purposes it was needed and it not only met but transcended them. There was not a convict left with a stub of hair, though their hair is always bristly; and very few had such constitution, as to keep any roots for future trouble. Universal

satisfaction was expressed, and my father put up the Royal Arms, twice as big as the knacker's across the road, and done in thicker timber. "Thoroughly candid, and straight-forward," he said to every one who spoke of it; "good value for money, good money for value. Public confidence met, by private industry, enterprise, and honour. I serve them exactly as I should serve you. Just to turn five per cent. on my money, and no more. If any man calls that exorbitant, let him come and do it cheaper."

The only thing at all mysterious was the requirement for six samples, to be delivered at six places far apart. But that was explained most pleasantly, so that my father rubbed his hands, and chuckled, while he was reading the debates, in the early part of the following session. A figuresome member of the Opposition, who thought himself fit to be Chancellor of the Exchequer, had given notice of a question, concerning a certain contract for soap, to be supplied to Her Majesty's penal establishments, etc., with dates, and other insinuations. And he made a very hasty speech about it, confounding the *post*, and the *propter hoc*; quite as if my father, whom he dared to call a "wholly unknown manufacturer," had been preferred for a lucrative contract, because of his behaviour at election-time! So far as wickedness can be good, this man spoke well, having got up all his facts; and he sate down in triumph, as he thought.

But before he had time to digest his cheers, the gentleman, who was to reply got up, with a beautiful smile, and a very pleasant glance at a paper laid before him, "I am furnished with particulars, from the head of the department, concerning this heinous transaction, sir," he said; "and I find that large samples were delivered in six quarters, widely apart, and wholly unconnected; the names of which I will read, if desired." Loud cheers followed from every corner of the House—for nobody likes to have his own rights interfered with—and the speaker concluded, "I will ask for no apology. From the Honourable Member for Clap-trap, it would be of no more value than his imputation."

"Well," said my father, when he had read this twice; "I call that something like a Government. If we only get a few more contracts, Sophy, we'll send Tommy into the House to see about them. There might be a stranger thing, my dear, than a long blue paper for ten thousand pounds, with "Thomas Upmore" signed for Her Majesty above, and "Bucephalus Upmore," for himself below. What a rage John Windsor will be in, when he reads about those six samples, and not one of them gone out of his gate! I had sense enough to keep the whole of that inside my own waistcoat."

Now, it would have been good, and even pleasant for the public—lustily though they condemned us, at the time—if the only increase of activity shown in those parts had come out of our chimneys. But there always is a mob of people, who never will leave well alone; and these had got up deputations, petitions, memorials, circulars, indignation meetings, committees, commissions, and worst of all missiles, concerning the wholesome smell we made, and had made before some of their fathers were born. When the unenlightened mass of minds falls into this bubonic fever of excitement, the right thing to administer is gruel, in the form of general promises, a desire to hear all that can be said, and a thoroughly unselfish gratitude towards those, who have made the worst of you. But my father had never possessed this wisdom, which belongs of sweet right to the Liberals; and whether on the ground of true British principle, or the Royal Arms, or the money coming in, he took a firm stand, with his hands in his pockets, and his legs well apart, and defied the public.

"Every blessed flue of mine," he said, "have gone ten feet higher, since I were a boy; and with present foundations, can't go no higher. Before folk grumble, their place is to stump up. If every cantankerous fellow, who don't know a wholesome smell by the touch of it, would put down a half-crown, if he has got one, instead of signing lies against me, I don't know but what I might lay foundations, and change my insurance, and go twenty foot higher. Though a heap of disease would break out, I expect. Look at the plants in my bed-room window, scarlets, and blue things,

and lilies of the Nile! Is there any man, or woman, round these parts, half so good-looking, or so sweet to come by? They like it rarely, and so would you, if you understood what is good for you. And who was here first, you, or I, and my fathers, for three generations of boilers? We didn't want the houses; they came round us; every brick of them was laid, with my smoke to set it. And very good neighbours they have always been, till this scientific stuff came up, about cur-bones, and oxen, and the Lord knows what! I tell you what—if you don't like it, budge yourself, but you won't budge me."

Such speeches only made the fuss grow louder; until the authorities felt themselves compelled to do something sanatory. There was no "Metropolitan Board of Works," as yet, I believe; or if there was, it never came up our way. But the Vestry of St. Pancras had many stormy meetings, which my father deigned not to attend; but his workmen were there in great force, and made more noise than our new steam-engine. In short, the matter came (as every matter does now, and the practice already was beginning) to what is called "a reasonable and satisfactory compromise, conciliating all interests." The complaint of the public had been about the air, and the noxious exhalations, and vile odours, as they chose to call them. But who can see the air? Who can tell what is in it? It varies with every puff of wind. Let us turn to something tangible. The earth is a thing that can be dealt with, and the earth is at the bottom of every mischief on the face of it. So, to cure the smell of our chimneys, they ordered a four-foot culvert down our valley, where the course of the old Fleet-stream had been; and the voice of the public went off to it.

This being settled, my father was enabled to make tenfold the smells he had ever made before, without any one hoisting a handkerchief. An inquisitive stranger would sometimes ask, whether this neighbourhood was always choked with vapours, which he coarsely stigmatized. A piece of valuable advice, common (yet neglected universally) about the prior claims of his own affairs, was the only reward for his sympathies. What right had a fellow, with a walking-stick, to come grumbling against our

rate-payers, and their engineers, and contractors? Measures were being taken, or at any rate were in contemplation; and every man with a horse and cart would get fifteen shillings a day for them.

But alas, how little do we forecast, while we vindicate, our own welfare! It would have been better for my dear father—as upright and downright a man as ever lived—to have gone to the expense of a new chimney-stack one hundred feet high, or even to have put out all his fires, than to have helped to bring that drain, down our hitherto Maiden valley. The soil in the bottom was of concentrated essence, combining all the density of bygone generations with the volatile relics of their labours. It would grow almost anything, if only scratched, and no healthier place for a walk could be found; but wisdom is not justified of her fathers, when she goes to turn them up.

In happy ignorance of woes impending, I went back to the *Partheneion*, and found the whole establishment turned upside down. *Grip* came with me, as a thing of course, and found his old barrel standing on its head, and a notice upon it in large letters—"No dogs allowed." If anything rouses the juvenile spirit, such rude breach of prescription does it. With the help of Jack Windsor, who was quite of my mind, I replaced the barrel in its old position, which was snug in a corner impregnable to guns, and I fastened him there with his own long chain, and said, "Now defend yourself, old boy. I have got lots of money, and you shall not starve." He fully understood the situation; and if any demand for sympathy arose, it would be on behalf of the individual attempting to dislodge him.

Then all of us were summoned to the hall, to hear an oration from the "Principal"—as he styled himself, to start with—our new schoolmaster, Ernest Mauleverum Crankhead, a short brisk gentleman, quite young, with a pale square face, a yellow moustache, and very quick bronzy eyes, which never took two seconds' rest upon anything. Accustomed as we were to the long grave countenance, waving white locks, and calm

abstracted gaze of our simple old Dr. Rumbelow, we could not believe that we saw the new man; until he stood up at what he called the *rostrum*, and hit it three times, with an ivory hammer.

"Going, going, gone!" Jack Windsor whispered; and gone was the glory of the *Partheneion*. We knew it, we felt it, without a word uttered, our hearts fell into the heels of our socks; and no boy thought twice of the things in his pocket. Our account would be with a sharp hand now, a resolute, and a malignant one; and what was worst of all, and which a boy descries at the very first glance,—we should not have to deal with a gentleman. "I shall never go up any more," thought I.

I remember very little of what Crankhead said; and none of it is worth repeating. But he gave us to understand, that the sooner we forgot everything we had learned hitherto, and began on lines entirely new, the better it would be for our own minds, and what mattered far more, our success in life. For the few, whose parents might still be benighted enough to insist upon Greek and Latin, a Classical Master would be kept, but the College—for such he had the cheek to call it—would henceforth aim at a loftier mark. Science was the noble, and simple distinction, the all-absorbing element of this age. Mankind had been lying on their backs till now, looking up at the stars, and at imaginary Powers; now they arose, and asserted their rights, and their kinship to every organic being, and the interchangeability of everything. Classes for science would be formed to-morrow, under the charge of the four most eminent Professors of the period, Professors Brachipod, and Jargoon, Chocolous, and Mullicles!

At the sound of their names, these gentlemen appeared. Conscience, and prudence, alike induced me to push Jack Windsor in front of me, because he was both broad and thick.

CHAPTER XVI.
NO EXTRAS.

Being older now, by several years, than when I had expected to be cut up all alive, and having been taught by Professor Megalow, that science is not of necessity cruel, I managed to sleep pretty well that night, and resolved to be brave in the morning. And truly there was no great need for courage; which rather disappointed me, and cast a slur upon my value, as a boy of exceptional interest. Not one of the four Professors took the trouble to look twice at me; each had his whole time taken up, in fighting for his own tongue, and purse. Their payment was to be by head of pupils—whether they fitted the head, or not—and being four in number, they put universal knowledge into four departments, each with a bigger name than the other. And each of our chaps, without ever having heard what the meaning of these big names was, had to put down his own (however short it might be) under sixteen columns, out of thirty-two, headed with the titles of the mysterious studies. Each of the Professors was to take eight sciences, for the subjects of his lectures; and most unfairly we were not allowed to know the human names presiding over each humanity. Every single boy of us wanted to sign to be under Professor Chocolous; not only because (as a general rule) great fun can be had with a German, and he is nearly always easy-tempered, familiar, and kind-hearted; but also because we had heard of his ambition to transmit a nascent tail to his descendants, and what could be finer than to help in its establishment? And next to him, we wanted to be under Mullicles, although about him we knew very little; except that he looked very soft, and expected to be disintegrated, without notice, into his component particles. On the other hand, Brachipod was as sharp, and full of points, as a cupping instrument; and Jargoon as dry, and creaky with long words, as a slow steam-roller pounding granite.

With heavy dismay I sate down, and gazed at the broad sheet laid before me. At the top were placed alphabetically the names of the thirty-two sciences proposed; names which it must have been anguish to conceive, agony to pronounce, and despair to remember. Under each name was a column, for the hapless victim to inscribe his own; and at the bottom a merciful notice—"No pupil need enter for more than sixteen of the above studies, during the present term. But all will be expected, in the ensuing term, to proceed to those which they now pretermit. The fee for each course of lectures is one guinea, payable in advance."

Although I could get on with Homer pretty well, and had read the first book of Herodotus, and one of "Porson's Four," and some Xenophon, it took me a long time to make out the name of any one of those sciences. I turned to my Lexicon, and sought for some, and for others I hunted in my Latin Dictionary, and seemed to get near some, but not to be sure; while of others there was no vestige. I was not aware yet, that the authors of these words are as rash with the Classics, as they are with logic, and maltreat the dead languages, as freely as the living.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," Jack Windsor said; "I'll go in for all thirty-two; and let father stump up, if he's got the blunt for it. Here goes 'John Windsor,' thirty twice over."

What a flood of light those plain words shed on my foggy, and thickly-fibred brain, unwitting as yet of the Athenian prototypes of all the Pansophists, pea for pea, in the pods of Aristophanes! The *blunt* was the point of all points with these hungry professors; and none could be got out of me. And yet, I should never have thought of that, without Jack's plain way of putting it. So I squared my elbow, and sprang my pen, and took care that the ink in it was not too round, and I said, "Don't jerk my elbow, Jack; it is no time for larks of any sort." And then I wrote, in fair hand, across all thirty-two columns, these simple words. "Father don't pay for extras. They tried it on before, but he would not have it. Signed, Thomas Upmore; witness, John Windsor."

This was a bold stroke of mine; and it succeeded, as a bold stroke often does, when it has the force of truth behind it. As soon as all these signatures of zealots for new learning (of whom a great many could not spell their own names) had been received in "Council," by our new Principal, and his four "highly-cultured coadjutors"—oh Lord, where is good English buried?—there came a squeaky call, from their sacred cell (as different from old Rum's sonorous, "send him hither," as the cry of a mouse behind the wainscot is from the roar of a lion) and the boy who had the longest ears made it out to be—"the presence of Thomas Upmore is required."

Now, I never had any great amount of pluck, which is a steadfast element; while all my elements were light and fleeting, and never would stand up together (as in a fine character they must do) without going up into the air, and turning round. A miserable shiver went through my heart, and turned my bright cheeks to a sad pale blue—so the other fellows said; though it recked me naught what manner of boy I might be, to look at.

"Tommy, keep your pecker up;" Jack Windsor hit me a slap on the back, to impress this counsel, which would have taken all my breath away, if it had not been gone already; "think of your dad, and all the money he is making. Stick well up to them, that's the only ticket. Make them all shake in their shoes, dear Tommy. They will send for me next. If you frighten them well, you will give me pluck to go on with it."

This was all very nice, from his own point of view; but I heartily wished that he had to go first, to show me the right way of doing it.

"Oh, Jack, you are so brave," I said, "if you would only come with me, and make believe you had been sent for too, I should take it so very kind of you!"

"Don't you wish you may catch it?" he replied, turning round, to be ready for the path of retreat.

"Well, at any rate, come to the door," said I; "to know that you are there, will be better than nothing."

"Oh bother, don't be such a funk," Jack answered; "why, Tommy, they won't eat you." And he took good care that they should not eat him, by bolting, as fast as his fat legs would go.

None of this tended to relieve my mind; but I tried to remember Achilles, and Hector, and all the brave men I had been reading of; yet in spite of them all, I took good care, so far as trembling hands allowed, to leave the door behind me open. It was now in my power, after fifteen years of growth, to go at such a pace with the wind behind me—and any wind blowing from a scientific point would surely find itself behind me—that if I could only get one yard's start, all the science yet invented—with the Devil at the tail of it—might break its wind without coming up with me. *Dat vires animus*. The whole of my *animus* was up and eager. I thought of all these wise men in our clot-pit; and out of despair I plucked hope, and defiance.

The longest dining-table in our hall, which would take thirty boys, and their plates, on each side, had been proved to be not half long enough for the length of the papers necessary for the lantern jaws of science. Accordingly, three long boards, upon which Dr. Rumbelow's Hermes had cleaned our knives, had been brought from his out-house, and set up, with green baize over them, to carry ink and papers. Our new master sat at the end of this length, with a brace of Professors, on his right hand and his left. To my innermost parts I recalled these four, and was amazed to find that they knew not me. Principal Crankhead waved his hand, for me to stand silent at the bottom of the table; and then they all turned round, and stared at me, with the exception of Herr Chocolous, who stood, with his chair pushed under the table, to assert his upright principles. And he seemed to me to be labouring not to laugh.

"The name of this pupil appears to be Thomas Upmore," began Mr. Crankhead, "the son of Bucephalus Upmore, a gentleman residing in a place called Maiden Lane. Instead of expressing his preference for

sixteen of the subjects proposed for his study, he has stated very briefly, that his father declines to pay for what he calls *extras*. He does not appear to have realized that these are the essential parts of all true education. Boy, what do you come here for?"

"If you please, sir, to be taught," I said, with a courage which surprised me, "to learn 'whatever is necessary for a liberal education,' according to what Dr. Rumbelow says to parents and guardians, in this paper." I pulled an old circular of the *Partheneion* from my pocket, and spread it on the table. "But father gave out, from the first, that he never would pay a shilling for extras; unless they agreed to take it out in soap."

"Take out science in soap, indeed!" muttered Professor Brachipod, forgetting how much he had done in that way; though certainly without intending it.

"Well, Upmore, tell us, if you can remember," Principal Crankhead went on, without deigning to notice old Rum's *prospectus*, "what are the *extras*, as you call them, which your father has refused to pay for?"

"Drilling, and drawing, and dancing, sir, and washing, and French, and bacon for breakfast, sixpence a time for the delicate boys; and I think there was something about new-laid eggs."

"Zere is no sooch ting, I vill not allow it pass"—broke in Professor Chocolous, "vat you call ze new-laid egg have no right to be so called, because——"

"Because it is generally stale, Professor. Well, Upmore, we seem to have ascertained what your father considered objectionable. But none of them belong to the domain of science. Your mind is a little confused, perhaps, as is only natural, at your age, after giving so much of it to Greek and Latin. Now take a fresh paper, and put your initials—we shall understand them—in the sixteen columns of your selection. Sit down, my lad; we shall teach you something yet."

Certainly my mind was now confused, neither by Latin nor Greek, but by the proximity of such a mass of learning, and its manner of foreclosing me. With a fog of big words spreading over my eyes, and pouring in at my ears, as I tried to sound them, I took up the pen which had been thrown to me; then I put it in my mouth, and said to myself—"it can't matter much what I sign; I'll go in for the biggest of the lot, to brag of them. Father likes something that he can't pronounce."

There was no word of less than five syllables there, and a good many of them went up to eleven. These I picked out, to learn first, with my thumbnail, after counting upon all ten fingers; and then I fell back on the decasyllabic branches of wisdom, and got my sixteen. But, before putting anything down in ink—which my father would have had to pay for, unless he went down to the County Court—I found in my mouth a little bit of the stuff (a twisted, brittle, filmy stuff it is), which may be the nerve of the quill for aught I know; and it saved me most happily from knowing what its name is.

For it got very easily into my throat,—so widely was that poor throat agape, at the prospect of all those tremendous words—and I put the feather-end in, to try to pull it out; and then I began to chew the harl; and who ever did that, without improving what he was going to write at first? Those gentlemen still were as eager as ever, that I should be shut up and done with; while I became unable to share their hurry, and desirous to see the case clearly.

"If you please, sir," I said, from the bottom of the table, after getting on a stool to be heard all up it; "the meaning of this paper is, that I am going to learn all this, for nothing."

Mr. Crankhead stared at the men of science, and with one accord they stared at him; and they would have been amused at my mistake, if it had not been too serious.

"Upmore, you have a great deal yet to learn;" the Principal spoke severely; "do you imagine that Science has ever imparted her blessings, for nothing?"

"I am sure, I did not know, sir," I replied; "but you said that all these were essential parts of true education; and old Rum says—Dr. Rumbelow, I mean,—in this paper, that all those are included in the money for the term."

"But we have changed all that, my boy. Our ideas of what education is are entirely different from those of the obsolete system, under which you have been trained hitherto."

"Then if you please, sir, my father ought to have had a new paper sent him, before he sent me back to school; or how can he tell what he is to pay? I am sure, that he won't pay a farthing more than he had to pay last quarter."

"Thomas Upmore, you may go;" the new Principal said, quite loftily, after whispering, and receiving whispers; "you need not return to the schoolroom at all, or to any part of these premises, except where your clothes and books are. You are too benighted, and contumacious, to deserve any higher education; such as you expect to get for nothing. Branker, see that this boy does not communicate with the other boys. Pack all his things up, and put him in a cab."

Thus was I discharged, very rudely as I thought, from the poor old *Partheneion*, now entitled the *Epistemonicon*; and I could not help crying at the manner of it, because people would say that I had been expelled.

But Branker, the new man-of-all-work, who seemed to care little about his place, at the sight of a shilling in my hand, allowed me to have a word or two, in the passage, with Jack Windsor.

"Jack, they have given me the sack," I said; "because I wouldn't put my name down, for father to pay sixteen guineas extra. If I had, I should have been whacked at both ends, for certain. He would have whacked me for doing it; and they would have whacked me worse, for not getting the tin. You have put down your dad for thirty-two guineas. Mind that, and I wish you luck of it."

"Stop the cab, Tommy; stop the cab," cried Jack; "I'll come away with you, in five minutes. I must go in and tell them, I did it for a lark. Why, I should get double the hiding that you would. My governor has got such a host of kids."

I ran to fetch *Grip*, that he might run behind, and I waited in the cab, for about two minutes, and then out rushed Jack, without any hat on, and jumped in, and banged up the glass, and shouted, "Jarvey, off for Maiden Lane, as hard as you can go!" Then we got out of sight in the back of the cab, and laughed, through the tears on our cheeks, at going home.

So it came to pass, that the boiling-interest was not represented any longer, in those halls of science. When my father heard what I had done, he shook my hand very heartily, and said that he never could have thought I had so much pluck; and he would not mind paying half again as much, but honestly, and on the square, you know, for my education to go on all right; and he would send them his bills, just to let them see what a sight of money their establishment had lost.

"And what language, I should like to know, was all that science to be put in? Elamites, Parthians, Medes, at least"—he said, as he looked at the paper of the fees—"to be any good value, for sixteen guineas."

"No, father," I answered; "it was all to be told us in English, every word of it; only very big words of course, such words as you couldn't make head or tail of."

"None the more honest for that," said father; "why, they make them out of their own heads! I could do that, if I chose to try. Greek and Latin is what I pay for; and this new lot don't know nought of it. If it wasn't for my knowledge of the law, I'd have a defamation action against them, for sending my only son home in a cab like this, and not have the manners to pay the fare! They have done the same thing to Jack Windsor, you say. Every mouth in the Lane will be full of it to-morrow. If John Windsor would go snacks, I should feel half inclined to consider about consulting a Solicitor. And I believe it would pay; I do believe it would. I am a public man now, and under Government I act; and such a man should not have his son kicked out, by a bunch of those dirty Professors."

"Bubbly, don't open old wounds," advised mother; "our Tommy is come home, and I am deeply thankful for it. How could they help getting rid of him, when they never could have taught him half he knows? They knew that he had served his time with their master, the great Professor Megalow; and how could they open their mouths before him? And how could they hold up their heads before Tommy, when they thought of the pit he led them into?"

"Aha, I see! That's it," cried father; "well, I musn't be angry with them after all. One good turn deserves another. And talking of that, we shall have no pits left, if what I was told to-day is true. The Vestry are going to send a man and two boys, all up through our valley, in the course of next month, with sticks and a line, to take measurements, and all the rest of it, for this drainage scheme. Well, it won't hurt us; but I doubt very greatly whether the smell they are sure to make will be wholesome for my workmen. I must try to leave more of my stuff about, to keep the air fresh and the bad smells away. Sophy, I must be off; you might give me a nip of Hollands, before I light my pipe. And while I am at work, you and Tommy can put your heads together, concerning the next thing to be done with a young scamp, who has been expelled from school."

CHAPTER XVII.
SELF-DEFENCE.

It appeared to me now, that my education might fairly be entrusted to myself, at least until after Christmas-time; but whether it was, that my dear parents were eager to push me on with learning, or else that they had enjoyed enough of my company for the present, the issue was settled against me, and without another week of holidays. Jack Windsor was in the same box with me; and his mother and mine laid their heads together, and came to the conclusion that Dr. Rumbelow had acted very badly. With the aid of a noble "manual of epistolary correspondence," they indited a joint letter to the new bishop, which must have grieved his upright soul. He answered right humbly, and in few words, that he grieved as deeply as they could do, at the utter subversion of a wholesome school; which would not have happened, if he could have helped it. But he had never been the owner, and only acted under the will of Trustees, who had not consulted him, when he left. Feeling the deepest interest in his beloved pupils of many happy years, he watched the result with sad apprehension, but could not interfere with it. But for any, whose parents desired their removal from the influence of wild doctrines, he could with high confidence recommend an orthodox, and most efficient teacher, an old pupil of his own at Oxford, an accurate scholar, and most active man, now doing excellent work in the Church. This was the Reverend St. Simon Cope, curate of St. Athanasius, a District church in Kentish Town.

Armed with this letter, the two ladies went to see Mr. Cope; and came back in high feather, perfectly full of him, and of new ideas. I could not understand their talk at all, and perhaps that was more than they did themselves. However, I made out that I was to get up at half-past five next Monday, put a strap-load of Greek on my back, and knock, at half-past six exactly, at the corner-house in Torriano Square.

All this I accomplished, not without some groans, and was met at the door by Mr. Cope himself. I wanted to have a good look at him, but entirely failed to manage it; so wholly did my nature fall under the influence of his, that when I went home at night, and father said,

"Well, Tommy, what is the new chap like?"

I could only answer, "I don't know. He is not like any man I ever saw before."

"Did he whack you, Tommy?" went on my father; "you must want it, after all this time."

"He!" I exclaimed with a lofty air; "he need never whack any fellow. I can tell that."

Of this wonderful man, it might truly be said, that he was wholly free from selfishness. Can anything, half so strange as that, be declared of any other human being? That my own little body should go up into the air, is exceptional, though not unparalleled. But for the human mind to leave the ground, is an outrage on the laws of gravitation, ten thousandfold as rare as any I have yet accomplished. And now that I have time to consider it calmly, this must have been the reason, why I could not make him out, even with my outward eyes. And probably this was the reason, why we all admired, obeyed in an instant, and thoroughly revered him; and yet we found our spirits rise, when we got away to people more of our own cast.

This gentleman never was in a hurry, but always calm and gentle, and quite ready to be interrupted; yet the quantity of work he got through in a day was enough for ten men of his strength. Twice every day, he had service in his church, without even a clerk to help him, and four hours every day he spent in visiting poor people. Moreover, he always had in hand some article for the great Reviews, and a heap of other careful work; and besides all this, (and I dare say the hardest of the lot to deal with) a score of us day-pupils, to be taught, and fed, and tended. Yet never was one of us ready with a lesson, without the master being there

to hear him. And he more than heard us; he poured his own mind, with all its clear and vivid power, as far into our thick brains as ever it would go, so that even Jack Windsor (who had no more taste in his head than a lignified turnip) told me, going home one night, that Horace was a fine chap after all, when you came to know what he was driving at. No other man in the world could have brought our Jack to that conclusion.

Now, in spite of all this, and the spending of every penny that he earned among the poor, the Reverend St. Simon Cope was not loved at all in Kentish Town; except by a few half-starving outcasts, and a good many ladies with nothing to do. And the reason of this was as plain as a pole—he was one of the "High-church parsons," whom the free-will of the Briton will never accept.

Under the care of this excellent man, I got on very fast in "Nescience," (as the *Epistemonicon* gentlemen called the classics), and history, and theology, and everything else except their own fads. From my very sad deficiency in weight, I never was a fighter, though often tempted grievously; but Jack Windsor was happily enabled to prove, that which has been proved perpetually in Town and Gown disputations, to wit, the clear superiority in conflict of the true Academic element.

For, as we came home about noon of a Saturday, with five days and a half of Greek inside us,—in a place where a bridge was, we were met, only Jack Windsor and myself, by a maniple—if they deserve the term—from the now adulterous *Partheneion*. These were fellows of the lewder sort, who had taken up gladly with all the new stuff, and were rank with all Chemical mixtures. Without looking twice at them, we could see they desired to give us a hiding. And they began the base unequal conflict, by casting very hard stones at us. With pleasure, and without disgrace (considering the force of numbers against us) we would have fled, by the road that had brought us; but they had provided against this measure, by posting large boys behind us. There was nothing around us, but a world of thumps; and the air was darkened with impending fists.

"Stop a bit; hold hard;" cried Jack Windsor, with his back against the coping of the bridge; "give us fair play, you lot of sneaking cowards. I see a chap, who has been at our house, and squibbed a wasp's nest with me. Let me speak a moment to Bob Stubbs. Now, Bob, I know you were an honourable chap, till you got among dirty foreigners. I don't want to fight you, 'cos we always were good friends. But pick out the biggest of your scientific lot, and let me have a fair turn with him; while Tommy here tackles some fellow of his size. You must all be going to the bad, up there; if you bring a score of fellows to pitch into two. In the old days, we always allowed fair play."

Being English boys, they were moved by this; and after some little talk, two rings were formed—one for Jack and his antagonist, and the other, alas! for me and mine. Loth as I was to fight, it seemed better than to be pounded passively; and so I pulled off my coat, and squared up, as my father had shown me he used to do. And, whether by reason of his ancient system being more practical than the new lights, or whether in virtue of my own quickness, in hopping away when knocked at, I may say, without any exaggeration, that I hit the other fellow more than he hit me; until I was grieved to see him bleed, and then I put down my fists, and shook hands with him.

But my own little combat was no more in comparison with Jack Windsor's, than the skirmish between two charioteers of the "Iliad," while their heroes fight. Jack was in earnest, and knew no remorse. He had been hit on the forehead by a stone, and could swear that the fellow before him was the one who threw it. Moreover, this boy had shouted, "Come on, Suds!" with a most contemptuous toss of his head, being bigger than Jack, though not so strong, for our Jack was built up like a milestone.

"Come on, Suds," he shouted; "come on, my lad of lather!"

"I'll lather you, if I can," said Jack.

The battle was long, and quick with a spirit of trenchant valour, on either side. I did not see the beginning, because I was strenuously occupied with my own engagement; but that being brought to a happy conclusion, the boy I had conquered joined me, with much good will, in observing the other fight. And here let me mention that his name was Bellows, Jeremiah Bellows of Blackpool, a prominent orator, as everybody knows, of the Liberal party, by and by.

When Bellows, and I, came up to look, there was no mistaking the nature of the fray. Very little time had been lost in repose between the rounds, and the action had been so vigorous, and so well sustained, that on either side now it was a harder job to fetch the breath, than to give the blow. Whichever might conquer, there could be no doubt that the fight was a credit to his school.

Happily for us, the "noble science of self-defence" was not yet one of the thirty-two taught by the four Professors. Otherwise Jack would have long been vanquished, for he had not much of polemical skill; and I was astonished at his endurance, having always found him peaceful. But I knew, by the way his lips were set, and his square style of going forward, that his mind was made up, to be knocked to pieces, sooner than knock under.

This was a lesson to me, than which I have never had a better one in all my life. There was scarcely a pin to choose between those two, in the matter of affliction. Jack had got one eye quite bunged up, and his enemy had both eyes half-way closed; the nose of our Jack was gone in at the middle, and that of his adversary at the end; and their other contusions might pretty nearly match. Yet Jack won, all of a heap. And why? Because he would rather be killed, than yield. The other fellow would rather yield, than stand the very smallest chance of being killed.

So when Jack came up for another good round, his enemy sate, and looked at him, and thought it would be wiser to negotiate. He was not by any means whacked, he declared, and he went on to prove it, though still

sitting down—as Britannia never lets her tail drop now, without elevating her tongue, to stand for it—but his mind was made up, not to incur further danger of blood-guiltiness.

After all the insults put upon him, Jack would not let him off, without a clearer understanding.

"Either you are whacked, or not," said he; "if you are whacked, say so straightforrard, and I will shake hands with you. If you are not, stand up again."

This was plain English, the only sensible thing in a case of that kind. The other boy looked about; but saw no way to shuffle out of it, having not yet been Prime Minister.

"I don't mean to fight any more," he said, "until I perceive the necessity of it. At the same time, you can see yourself, that I am not a bit afraid of you. Every one who knows me will bear me out in that. I could prove it, if I had time; but there goes the dinner-bell, and we all must run. Not from you, mind, not from you; only because we are obliged to bolt."

Likely enough, there are people who would be glad to make light of this victory; as they do with all those we always lose, while blowing up the trumpet in the very new moon, if ever we cannot help winning one. But Jack, and I, took a natural view of the facts we ourselves had created. Science had bitten the dust before the powers of ancient literature, though the latter had struggled at fearful odds; and seven of the boys, who had seen it, persuaded their parents to take them from the Gorgon, and apprentice them again to the gentle Muse, who only strikes in self-defence. And as soon as my father and mother heard it—by reason of my bruises, one of which required raw beefsteak,—they were for ever confirmed in their perception of their own wisdom.

But alas! I scarcely know how to tell the next event in my sad career. Gladly would I leave it all untold, save by mine enemies; if the latter would only tell it truly, or leave it untold falsely. But this it is hopeless to expect. There is a certain rancour in all persons of loose politics;

wherewith—to put it liberally—nature, abhorring a vacuum, has stopped the vast gap of their principles. And this pervasive bitterness, when not obtaining vent enough, as it fairly might do upon one another, sometimes sets them raking up the private life, and domestic history, of those who are not like themselves.

It has been related, some way back, that the great authorities of our parish, having been urged by fussy people—most of whom paid no rates at all—to abate, what they were pleased to call, the nuisance of our wholesome smell, had arrived at last at a resolution, to cure the air of our chimney-tops, by carrying a big culvert through the valley, a hundred yards below. How this was to effect that purpose, none of us clearly understood; but as it would not come near our works, yet saved them from being grumbled at, we accepted the conviction of the public, that it must prove a perfect cure. And reasoning by analogy, we expected no stroke to be struck, for a score of happy years yet to come.

But Joe Cowl, that same chimney-sweep who had tried to summon father, told all his friends, till he quite believed, that he never had been the same man, since the time my father syringed him. If this had been true, how much it would have been to his benefit, and his neighbours'! But being scant of introspection, he positively made a grievance of it! He contrived to push himself on the Committee appointed by the Vestry, for the drainage of Maiden valley, for no other reason in the world, than that he hoped to pester us, by carrying out that noisome scheme. As everybody said, there was no reason for such hurry; the valley had been a valley for more thousands of years than we could count, without wanting a bodkin put along it. In wet weather it drained itself; and in dry weather what was there to drain? The Lord had made it, as seemed Him best; and could any ratepayer improve His works?

Nevertheless, by stirring up, and rushing about with his best clothes on, and grouting (like a pig, with his ring come out) and writing, every other day, to every paper that would print his stuff, Chimney-sweep Cowl robbed all the parish of the pleasure of considering the next thing to be

done. For he made them actually begin this job, at very little more than three years from the time of their voting it urgent, and not very much over two years from the time they raised the cash for it. But we let him see, when it was begun, that we were rather pleased than otherwise; and father went down and told Cowl himself, with as pleasant a smile as need be seen, that he would lend them a spare wheel-barrow, if they would put new gudgeons in; and as a large ratepayer of St. Pancras, he would try to keep them to their work. And it is a sad thing now to think of, that if he had been a bad-tempered man, and shunned them altogether, he might have been alive, while I write this.

Perhaps no man in London, except the Reverend St. Simon Cope, worked harder now than my father did. Not from any narrow-minded hankering after bullion; nor the common doom of our species, to find its final cause, as well as case, in *specie*; but from the stern resolution of a man, to turn out a good article, at a good figure, and to keep his own finger, and no others, in his pie. Mr. John Windsor had been trying very hard, to dip his own ladle into our warm vats; but while father valued him most highly as a friend, and would eagerly have done anything whatever, that lay in his power, to help him; he found it lie more and more beyond his power, to let him come into his yard just now. Plump and portly as Mr. Windsor was, and equally blunt at either end, my father kept calling him—as soon as he was gone—the thin end of the wedge, and telling dear mother to be very careful, not to say a word to let him in. This was exactly in accordance with my mother's own view of the case; and she said, that she first had insisted upon it, and that if Mrs. Windsor came sounding her for ever—as she did, even on a Sunday—it would take her a long time to discover any hollow place in her presence of mind. For she always answered.

"Oh, my dear, what do I care for odious business? You know, how much sooner you would hear me talk, about delightful Happystowe, and the sun coming over the sea, and the shrimps, and the shameful proceedings of the bathing females—for I never can call them ladies—and that dear good Lady Towers-Twentifold, who longed so extremely to make my

acquaintance; and has written once more, for my Tommy to go down, and spend the holidays with his old friend, Sir Roland, at Twentifold Towers. What a pity it is, that we live so far asunder!"

"But don't you think, dear," Mrs. Windsor asked demurely, "that when the wind was blowing towards the windows of the Tower, her ladyship might object a little to the—the flavour of Mr. Upmore's operations?"

CHAPTER XVIII.
AH ME!

While a fact is under fifty years of age, surely it is early days to despise it, as if in its dotage, and to traduce it as a mere tradition. Yet this was already, at the time I speak of, done by the wiseacres of Maiden Lane to the great, and well-established fact, that the Cholera, when it first appeared in the year 1832, had avoided—as if it ran away from the feeding smells, and pursued the opposite—every house, where a man could say that he ever tasted our chimney-stack. On the other hand, it had followed strictly, as on any good map can be shown, the main lines of the sewage system, so far as these could yet be traced. For as yet, they were very bold in places, and then vanished, without a mouth.

Now, if there had been any medical man, with power to think for himself—as certainly some do, in every century—he might have chanced to put these two facts together, and breed a conclusion. And the conclusion must have been—increase your chimneys, issuing a fine detergent smell, and abolish all drains, that bottle up and condense destructive odours, sending them out with a fizz at the traps, to rush into first-floor windows. But alas! there was no such man just then; and I fear that even now he is hard to find. Drain, drain, drain, was the cry of the period; and ventilate all your drains, that every one may smell them, and inhale a rich interest for his sewage-rate.

My father had never been blessed with any scientific education. He had thriven most stoutly, as his years increased, by dwelling in a feeding atmosphere. In an unwise moment, he convinced himself, that a change of inhalation would improve his lungs; which were as sound as a bell used to be, in the days when people knew how to cast them. The only fault anywhere near them was, that from the increase of "adipose deposit," they had not the room to swing, that in thinner years they had.

But he said to himself, and to my mother too—though she had the sense to say 'nonsense'—that a daily influx of entirely fresh odours would enable him to holloa, as he used to do.

"Did you ever see Tommy look so well," he asked, "as when he came back from the inside of the whale? I require something of that sort; and I shall go, and smoke my pipe, every evening after tea, in the bracing air of Joe Cowl's drain."

"That sounds very well," dear mother answered, "but I do think, Bubbly, that you ought to ask Dr. Flebotham first, what he thinks about it."

To me it seems a sufficient proof, how grand my dear father's constitution was, that for more than two months he pursued this medical course, as he loftily termed it, without any visible harm to himself. And to the last moment of his life—so stout and solid was his faith in his own mind—he declared that his illness had nothing whatever to do with the cause we assigned for it. But after looking blue in the face one Sunday, and suffering from cold hands and feet, he came home at night, with a desperate headache, such as he had never felt before. My mother, in alarm, gave him brandy and salt; but he took the brandy, and left out the salt. On the following day, he was terribly sick, and as blue as the men at the Indigo works; and Dr. Flebotham pronounced it a case of aggravated English Cholera. He ordered strong measures to be taken at once, hot applications, and a bottleful of chalk, with opium in large quantities.

"We must not be nervous, my dear madam," he said to my mother, who was crying sadly; "our dear patient has an iron constitution, and great strength of will, and a rare fund of courage. Why, he won't admit even now, that there is much amiss with him; and nothing will make him stay in bed. The recumbent position is the one he should preserve, to give our therapeutic course fair play; yet he keeps on calling for his boots, and would go to his work without them, if you left the door unlocked. We must humour him, my dear madam; we must tell him that he shall go to-morrow to his most useful, and in many ways I am sure—delightful

occupation; without which this neighbourhood would lose one of its most—most pungent associations. Though Mr. Windsor certainly does, in his smaller way, make a much stronger st—stimulate our olfactory powers to even higher action, is what I mean. And it seems to be now very generally admitted, apart from all incontrovertible statistics, I may indeed say that it has been proved, *a priori*, by our new lights, that the chemical constituents, which you liberate by rapid evaporation, are for hygienic purposes the very ones which Nature has omitted to supply. But bless me, I have a lady doing well with twins! You will remember all my directions. I shall have no time to dine to-day. I hope to look in again, at six o'clock."

He lifted his hat, and had scarcely time for me to run after him, and say, "If you please, sir, mother does so hope that you will not be offended, if we have a roast fowl on the table hot, when you come from the poor lady, with the two babies."

"Tommy," replied Dr. Flebotham; "that is the very first nourishment, your dear father should take, in a solid form. He must not touch it to-day, of course; but a very small slice, quite cold, to-morrow. It should be roasted this afternoon, and it must be excessively tender. It might be as well, for me to judge of that myself. It should be a large one, and yet very young—such as they call capons. Tell your dear mother, that I will try it for him."

"Oh, thank you, sir, thank you! How very kind you are!" I exclaimed, with the tears coming into my eyes. "Only please to be punctual at six o'clock."

He made this promise; and made it good.

"Unless the case becomes complicated," said the Doctor, three days afterwards, "with cardiac symptoms, or pulmonary, or possibly renal derangement, or any other resultant cachexy of the organisms; we may anticipate, my dear madam, a condition of gradual convalescence."

"Why, Doctor, he is ever so much better already!" my mother exclaimed impatiently; "he has ordered our Tommy to go himself, as far as the shop of the famous Mr. Chumps, and to try to be back by twelve o'clock, with three pounds cut thick of tender rumpsteak, and two dozen of oysters from Tester's. And he is coming downstairs, to dine at one o'clock. But he is so weak, that I shall have to help him. Deary me, what a thing to think of! And a week ago, he carried me up, when I slipped, and hurt my ancle. And I am not so light as I was, you know, sir. All that I leave now to my son Tommy. He will never be good weight."

"Very few medical men," replied the Doctor, with a pleasant smile at both of us, "would like to have the question of diet so completely taken out of their own hands. But as soon as therapeusis has reinstated our patients, though it be but a little, they are apt to think themselves quit of us. And then there comes the relapse, my dear madam; then there comes the sad relapse; and the blame of it is cast on us."

"He has taken a great many bottles, sir, such as I never could have believed;" my mother answered sorrowfully, "and it will be a little too hard upon him, not to let him have his change. How much will you please to allow him, sir?"

"Not an ounce, if I could help it—liquid nourishment for three days more. Our poor stomach is still most delicate, and unfitted for solid food. Restrict him, at any rate, to three ounces, and the like number of oysters."

This was easier said than done. My father got through a good pound of steak, and at least a dozen oysters; and after that, he felt so well, that he had a pint of ale, and some of his healthy red returned to him. My mother was so pleased with this, that she came to his chair, and kissed him; and he said,

"My dear, I thought at one time, I never should kiss you no more, nor Tommy neither. But the Lord has shown Himself most merciful. And I don't see, as a pipe would hurt me."

The next day, he was so much better, that at nine o'clock I went back to school, and worked with a light heart; trying to make up for the work I had fallen back with. And Mr. Cope was most kind to me, and said that I did very well.

I was let off, early in the afternoon, as mother had asked that I might be; and with a good wind at my back, I made my way home, at such a pace, that every one turned to look at me; for my lead had been laid aside, through father's illness, which was weight enough. My mother was equally short of breath, with pleasure and excitement, when she ran out to kiss me. And she said,

"Oh, Tommy, your father is as well as ever, I do believe. He came downstairs without a stick, and he wrote for an hour about something; and then he made a capital dinner, and slept a little in the afternoon. And Dr. Flebotham came and saw him, and said, 'My dear sir, not too fast! You are getting well, at a wonderful rate, but you must avoid excitement. You are not quite out of our hands yet.' And then he turned to me, and said, 'We must be careful of the heart, dear madam. The heart has had a sharp trial, and has borne it well; so far as we can see. But we must not be too hard upon it, while its action is so weak. Any sudden shock, for instance, might have very grave results.' Your father began to laugh at this, until he remembered how very kind the doctor had been, and so skilful. And then he begged his pardon, and shook hands with him; and the doctor said, 'Not a bad grip that, Mr. Upmore, for a hand that was like a swab, on Monday. Keep him quiet, and he will do. Ah, I shall boast of this case, a little; and I am sure you will help me, madam.' And so I will, Tommy, though I never can approve of being called 'Madam,' like a Frenchwoman; for your dear father is in such spirits, that he has taken an ounce of bird's-eye with him, and gone to his favourite corner, by the tree; where the wind brings down the smoke so well, and what the people who write in the papers call the 'pestilential fumes.' All he now wants to set him up, is that, and a quart of fresh-drawn stout; and he said, that he would wait for that, till you came home from school to fetch it. So don't stop now, to do anything, my dear,

except to put your slop-coat on, but run down to the tree, and here is the eightpence—a couple of Joeys, as you call them—and there's going to be a crab for supper, Tommy; such a beauty, from a friend of yours! I'll tell you all about it, when you come back, and you shall have his toes to suck, while you help me to do his cream."

I did love a crab, I always did. And as the greatest delight in oysters hovers over opening them (for no delight does more than hover), so of a crab, the finest hope is in getting him ready to be eaten, and in tasting stolen bits of him.

"You may look at him, Tommy," my dear mother said; and there he lay among lettuces, with his sweet legs clasped, as if in prayer for some one to come and eat them, and his fat claws crossed, in resignation to the mallet, or the rolling-pin.

It was not a sight to cause depression in the hungry human mind; neither could that effect be got from a very well-browned backstone cake; which mother allowed me to smell, before she put it back, to crisp a bit. Oh, if she had only said, "My dear boy, put your belt on," what a difference it would have made! But she never thought of it, any more than I did; and I always tried not to think of it.

With all these things to set me up, and a holiday and a half to come, out of the two ensuing days—for this was Friday afternoon—I set off, rather at a dance than walk, with my arms thrown up, and lungs expanded; and my broad-brimmed Leghorn giving flips at the wind, like a pigeon's wing; and the tucks, and gathers, and quilted flounces of my blouse lifting, and filling in the air, like clouds; and scarcely so much as a thread of my curls—as mother was fond of expressing it—that did not glisten in the sun, and hover like a crown of golden gossamer. Instead of opening the gate, I flew over it, and could scarcely keep between the walls below, and I heard mother calling,

"Oh, Tommy, dear Tommy, come back for your belt."

And I tried to do it; but the breeze was behind me, and I must go on. Then, where the old weeping plane-tree stands, at the bottom of our garden and enjoys the smoke, there was father on the bench, with his back against the trunk, and his red plush waistcoat on, and a long "churchwarden" in his mouth, and his favourite pewter waiting for the stout, and his face so bright at seeing me, that I called out,

"Father is quite well again! As well as he ever was, in all his life!"

And he said—"Yes, Tommy, thank the Lord, I am. I've been thinking of you all day, my boy. Come, and give me a kiss. Why, how wonderful you look!"

For the joy was more than I could bear; and instead of being able to go to him, I was lifted in a moment, from the surface of the earth, quicker than I ever had gone up before. Now, the faster I go up, the faster I go round, —this seems to be a law of my ascents—yet I do not remember to have felt much fear; and indeed there was little to be afraid of, unless it was a fall into our own chimneystacks. And in my vile stupidity, I even called down—

"Now, father, now will you believe at last?"

Alas, that my very last words to him should have been of low, and unfilial triumph! As I tried to look down at him, through the tree, to show him how comfortable I was up there, I saw him rush out, with his pipe in one hand, from the bower of the drooping branches; and he stood, with his legs wide apart, and his hat off, and threw down his pipe, and rubbed his eyes with both hands, and then lifted them up, and cried —

"The Lord forgive me—that He hath made a son of mine to fly!"

Before he had finished his exclamation, I could see him no more, (because of the way in which I was carried round,) and thus escaped the awful shock of seeing my own dear father fall. And before I could look

again in that direction, the briskness of the wind, which was north-west, had taken me so far, that the plane-tree came between, and I could not see the fearful thing that I myself had done.

Yet somehow, or other, my mind misgave me, that I had left some harm behind; and my weight grew greater and greater; as I saw no more of father, who ought to have run up the hill to watch me, as people do to a balloon. This made me come down, at the bottom of our yard, when I might have gone over the Regent's Canal. My flights are always cut short by grief; but no other, by such a grief as this.

CHAPTER XIX.
COMFORT.

When I came to know what I had done, through shameful levity, and heedlessness, and selfish triumph and greedy ways—for that crab had much to do with it—also through laziness, and, self-conceit, and the absence of humble gratitude—which would have taught me to fall on my knees, instead of skipping up like a bubble—for many hours I lay and groaned, and was much more likely to sink into the earth, than ever to mount into the air again.

My mother, in her first great shock and anguish, had called me a wicked boy, and said that I never ought to have been born; and I could only answer—

"Oh, how much I wish I had never been! But it was more your doing than mine, mother."

I believe that I should have gone mad, after seeing the people come with father's coffin, if I had been left in the house, to hear, and think of all that they were doing. For mother was not at all strong-minded, but kept on falling from one condition of heart into the opposite; and sometimes cried by the hour, and sometimes laughed at herself, for the soreness of her eyes. And then it was so clear what father had been, by the way that every one spoke well of him—so gentle, and generous, and kind-hearted, and living entirely for the good of others—that instead of being comforted, I cried more, to think that it was I, who had destroyed all this. Several people took me by the hand, or patted my head, and made me look up at them, all of them seeming to say the same words, so far as I took heed of them—"Don't fret, my boy, don't knock under like that. It can't be helped now. Why, you did not mean to do it; and you must bear it, like a man, you know."

But all this only made me fret the more; my heart was so broken that I touched no food, and I kept on asking every man, who looked at all like an authority, to please to get me sent to prison for seven years' hard labour. Finding no one ready to do this, I banished myself to the coal-cellar, and had a fresh cry with the maid, whenever she came to fill the scuttles. For no one else came near me now, my poor mother being unwell upstairs, and the command of the house handed over to people, who called themselves her nearest relatives; and were so, if Uncle Bill had met with a watery grave, as was supposed. These people were the Stareys of Stoke Newington,—a widow lady, and her two unmarried daughters, beginning now to be old maids. Mrs. Starey was mother's half-sister, yearly fifteen years the elder; and so her daughters were my half first cousins, and might have tried to help me. Mother said afterwards, when she came to know of all their conduct, that they did their best to send me after father; and for a very good reason of their own—if I were out of the way, they would be the nearest to her (if Uncle Bill were drowned, as they had reason to hope of him) and under my father's will that might be of no little service to them. But it is not in my nature, to believe that they would act so. And even by seeming so to do, they lost all chance of everything. So much wiser, as well as sweeter, is it in the long run for us, to be kind to one another.

But to dwell upon this, is hateful to me, and I cannot bear ill-will. Most likely the truth was simply this, that they had quite enough to do, with mother lying ill, and father dead, and could not be bothered with me as well, and therefore, were glad to be quit of me, saying that a boy's grief soon forgets itself. And if I did not eat, it was because I was not hungry; but time and youth would soon cure that. And perhaps they might have done so.

However, a man who was not in the habit of judging people harshly, the Reverend St. Simon Cope, was highly indignant with them. As soon as he heard of our sad loss, he thought he had a right to come and help us, as a minister of the Lord, though we were not in his District, and even belonged to another parish. Mr. Cope was not at all the man to move his

neighbour's landmark, and he knew that our parson (who never came near us) was largely Evangelical, as the people who went to hear him said. So that Mr. Cope came to visit us, and was careful to put it so, not as a minister of the Word, but as my tutor in dead languages. In whatever capacity he meant to come, no sooner did he see how we were placed, than he threw parish boundaries overboard, and became the true minister of Christ. It is not for me to tell what he said; such matters are far above me. And in truth it was less what he said than did, and his manner of doing it, that moved us. I had thought him a very cold man before—so little had he shown of feeling, as perhaps was needful among boys, but now brave tears were on his firm thin cheeks; and I sobbed to look at them.

"Tommy," he said, as he drew me forth from the coal which was all over me, and he never had called me "Tommy" before, which made it sound so kind to me; "Tommy, you must get up, and wash, and take some food, and come with me. Your dear mother is very poorly, and I have promised to take you to her. It is the greatest comfort she can have; but she must not see you look like this."

"Have I been and killed mother too? Will mother die, sir, do you think, the same as my father did, through me?"

"No, my dear boy. Your mother will soon be well again, when she sees you. She keeps on calling 'Tommy, Tommy!' But they say that you refuse to go to her."

"They told me, sir, that she never would bear the sight of me again, as long as she lived. And she keeps on saying, 'Wicked Tommy, wicked Tommy, why ever were you born?' And I wish I never had been, sir."

"Listen to me for a moment, Tommy. Not one word of that is true. What she may have said at first, I cannot tell, and you must not think of; for she cannot have known what she said. I am sure, that you have a tender heart, and not a bitter one, my child. You have been afflicted heavily, and you blame yourself unjustly. Your only fault was sudden and thoughtless

joy; and your mother sees that now. She wants you to forgive her, for she behaved unkindly, and she feels it. And if you wish to make her well, go up, and see her, and give her a kiss, and let her talk, while you say little. Then she will get some sleep to-night; she has not had a wink, since her sad shock. And to-morrow, she will be well almost, and able to face her sorrow calmly, for her illness is more of the mind than body. But go, and do what I told you first; and then I will take you to the door."

Thus it was that this good man saved us, or me at least, from black despair, and consequent insanity; for who can be sane, when hope is dead? Everything came to pass, exactly as he had foretold it; though I will not attempt to describe what passed, between dear mother and myself. Such matters are more for the heart, than tongue. Enough, that when she was quite worn out, with feeling things, and talking of them, she fell into a smiling sleep, and I smoothed the bows of her night-cap, and tried not to believe how pale she was, and how many little sheaves of silver grief had set up in her fine dark hair.

Then, when she was fast asleep, after having managed, with my help, to get through a calf's sweetbread—which Mr. Cope himself went all the way to Mr. Chumps, to fetch for us—and there was no likelihood of her wanting me till morning, my tutor said,

"Tommy, you look respectable; which could hardly be said of you just now. Get your nightclothes, and whatever you want, and reverse the accustomed walk. Come with me to Kentish Town and I will bring you back in a day or two. But I cannot give you much time to get ready, and you will have to walk six miles an hour."

If he had told me to take his hand, for an urgent appointment with the Devil, I should have done it, without two thoughts; but the only engagement he had to keep, was with his congregation. This was at eight o'clock in the evening; and counting me, and a baby, there were eight of us there for the good of it, without including the minister. This made me think, with a turn of tears, of a story my father used to tell, of his asking the Clerk at some church, why the Vicar had service at five o'clock of an

afternoon on week-days, instead of seven, or eight, or nine. "Lord bless you, sir," the Clerk replied, "if we was to go into them long hours, we should never keep up with the time of day; five is our number at the outside, and no more." And although the joke was very small, it made me smile, as a bad joke does; when I never expected to have another smile. The service, moreover, did me good; though I never heard a word of it.

He put me with the other boys, next day; and they were very kind to me, knowing the trouble that I was in. Jack Windsor was not there now; because Mr. Cope had plainly told his father, that he found it useless to go on with him, unless there were any downright need of a standard to pass—and it must be a low one—for the Army, or for medicine, or for Holy Orders. For all lower purposes, his tutor said that he was quite up to the average; he could write and spell, quite well enough, and was up to the mark in arithmetic. But of Latin and Greek, if by great pressure, any more were ground into him, there was no chance of it staying longer, than the time his nails (which he was always biting) would take to grow, if he left off. Mr. Windsor answered loftily—for, together with his wife, he had always taken Jack to be a wonder—that he considered his son too good, by a d—d sight, for any of the lines of life Mr. Cope had been kind enough to mention, and he would take away poor Jack that day, and put him into his own office; where he would learn life, instead of burying dead languages.

Now, my dear father was in the habit of speaking his mind quite plainly; but he never would have spoken like that, so rudely; and sooner would he have bitten his tongue, very severely, I am sure, than have sworn, in the presence of a parson!

However, although Jack was gone, there were several fellows who had heard all, and a great deal more than all, about me, and my inborn affliction; and although they behaved with extraordinary kindness (being all on the way to be gentlemen) whenever they thought that I was not looking, they were looking at me, with desire to form their own opinions silently, and compare them freely, when my back was turned.

For the result of any peculiarity, less conspicuous perhaps than mine, is to attract attention; and that becomes a curse far greater, than the blessing of even the noblest gifts.

When the Doctor was kind enough to spare my mother all the public pain of an inquest, by certifying "sudden death, from failure of the heart, after violent attack of Cholera," it might have been hoped, that outside strangers would have gone on their way, without meddling. So all right-minded persons did. They had their little talk among themselves, and expressed a very natural surprise, and agreed, or differed, according to the peace, or pugnacity of character. And the matter would have been a nine days' wonder, for the nine or ten beholders, but for the prying self-conceit of a picker-up of news for the *Pratt Street Express*, a penny paper, coming out on Saturdays. I will not speak ill of this gentleman; for I came to know him afterwards, and found him a pleasant, and well-meaning man. He had no intention of inflicting pain; and he freely admitted, that a sense of duty compelled him to write, what he did not believe a word of, lest a rival journal should get the start of his.

My tutor, Mr. Cope, sent a line to my mother on Tuesday, to inform her, that he thought it would be, for very many reasons, wiser that I should not be present, at the funeral of my beloved father. He did not tell me, that it was to be that day; and I did not venture to ask about it, leaving myself entirely in his hands. My mother wrote back, as it afterwards appeared, that she quite agreed with him, and would not expect me, until all was over. That same evening, he took me home, and asked me on the road, whether I could bear to hear a few words from him. I said yes, whatever he thought fit, for my heart was strengthened, while I held his hand.

After words of religious consolation, which fell from his lips, as if from heaven—for the whole of his life was above this world, and the preface to a better one—he proceeded partly as follows, though I cannot put it quite as he did—

"From all that I hear, and allowing much for large exaggerations, you have a remarkable gift, my boy; of which I heard something from my friend, the Bishop. From my own observation, I know that your bodily frame is of wonderful buoyancy; as your mind was also, until this sad distress, for the time, oppressed it. You have very good abilities, far above the average, an extremely tenacious memory, quick apprehension, with clearness of insight, and a love of whatever is elegant; which would make you a very good classical scholar, with industry, good teaching, and above all, good health. That last is the point, which makes me doubt the wisdom of pressing you much, in that way; although you have never known a day of illness, until this trouble fell upon you. For a body so light can scarcely contain the substance needful for hard work. But your duty, as to that, will depend very much upon what your father's orders were. He has left, (as I happened to observe) a statement in writing of his wishes concerning you. One of the ladies in the house had opened his desk, which had the key left in, while looking for some paper, to boil the kettle. And I fear, that she would have used this important paper, in ignorance of what she was doing at the moment, if I had not asked her to put it back. Then I locked the desk, and your mother has the key. It was not a will—your mother has his will—but to you it should have all the authority of a will. These things are important; but what I would speak of is, from my point of view, more important still. You know, that whatever is given to us, is given for some good purpose. Your mental gifts are not wonderful; although, as I have said, they are above the average. But your bodily gifts are quite exceptional—I think I may say, though I have never studied physics—and for them, you will have a good account to render."

"But how, sir, how?" I asked with some excitement; "as yet I have only come to trouble, through all that. Please to tell me any way of doing any good with it."

"At present I cannot," Mr. Cope replied; "but as sure as I am speaking to you, Tommy Upmore, the way and the means will appear, by and by. It is your duty, to improve your gift, so far as discretion and health permit,

and to await the opportunity for some great good, to your country, humanity, or religion."

CHAPTER XX.
BOIL NO MORE.

That very evening, it was thought wise that the members of the Starey family, who had come so kindly to our aid, should return to the bosom of their own affairs, at that pleasant place, Stoke Newington. My dear father was so widely known, and so loved and admired, by all the trade, that he received an exceedingly large funeral. My dear mother told me, how many high firms, nearly all of them wholesale, were represented; but I was pleased only because of her pleasure, or rather of the comfort she drew from it. Moreover, there were ancient friends who came, as well as still more of new date, and even some nephews of the name of Upmore, with warm recollections of their dear Uncle, and hopes of a mutual (though posthumous) remembrance. Some of these had a good claim to be fed, in the hunger and thirst of unavailing sorrow—for none of them was down for sixpence—and my mother, who had made a great effort to attend, naturally left Mrs. Starey, and her daughters, to offer consolation to these mourners. Among them, so deep a flow of sympathy was opened, that when Mr. Cope and myself came in, all the members of the Starey family, for our three had fetched the residue, were (as Mr. Cope said afterwards) totally unable *stare*. This made it incumbent upon us to send them home; and two cabs were ordered, with drivers of well-known integrity, who received the whole of them, and their goods, on condition of getting their money, as soon as their job was discharged conscientiously. Only they must get it from the people they took home, and not from those compelled to pack them off. Like all other sensible arrangements, this turned out to all reasonable satisfaction; though the Stareys made a fearful fuss about it, grieving to go away at all, and still more to do it at their own expense. They seemed to forget altogether, that when starvation stared them in the face, my father set them up in a

small candleshop, and supplied them for three months, on full credit. But such is the way of the world; and what right have I to be finding fault with it, while yet I continue to belong to it?

When all this was over, and my mother gone to sleep, I opened the paper which she had given me; and with two of our own best candles lit, (for my father would never have gas in the house, to ruin our eyes and to disgrace our business) I read every word of it, sighing sometimes, and sometimes crying, to find how good he had been to me, who had paid him out so badly. And private as the matter was, the public, having taken such a kindly interest in me, might fairly call me ungrateful, if I shut them out of all of it. Neither could that be done, without a confusion arising between us. My dear father had clear ideas, as to his own will and way; and while he enjoyed himself much in the world, he carried on his work to suit. He had written a letter to me, to be read when he could no more talk to me; though he little thought, how soon that would be. After things which I need not enter into, he proceeded with these words, the whole being written in a plain round hand:

"You will see, my son, that I have worked hard, chiefly that you may do well. If anything happens to me of a sudden, as may be the case, after what I have gone through, your mother will be well provided for, as she has thoroughly deserved of me. Everything will be at her discretion; but I am sure that she will carry out whatever I wish concerning you. Cut no capers with my hard earnings; I think you have too much sense for that, and I have taken good care to prevent it. None of your high society nonsense, which is not fit for a tradesman's son; but a steady rise in the world, which is according to the laws of England. When the business has been well disposed of, after completion of all jobs in hand, according to the meaning of my will, you must go on with your school-learning, at the Oxford colleges, where your friend Bill Chumps has done so well. I have had a long talk with Mr. Cope, though I did not tell your mother of it, and he says that the money will not be thrown away; for it makes you anybody's equal, except among the nobility. You have quite as good a

head piece as Bill Chumps, if you will stick to it, as he has done; and you will see that it pays as well to boil down animals, as to cut them up, when a man understands the business.

"When you have been through the Colleges, I intend to send you into Parliament, that you may flabergast the Radicals. These are now making so much bluster, and getting their own wicked way so fast, that unless a firm stand is made against them, no man's life will be his own, no more than his land or money will. Robbery is the beginning, and robbery is the end of it; and in the middle stands the man with the biggest pair of jaws; and laughs, as he pockets all their thievery. If this goes on, a man had better lie down on his back, and rant all day, than labour hard, and be robbed of it. You have heard me talk of this, my son; but we have only turned the first leaf yet; if Mr. Panclast gets the power he has set his stubborn heart on.

"Tommy, I am not a wise man, nor even to be called a clever one; but I am of a sort that is going by, and perhaps will be missed hereafter. That is to say, an Englishman, of common sense, and of fair play, and of tidy pride in his Country. All these are dragged in the dirt, by the people now getting upper hand of us; and what will come of it? They will drag themselves in the dirt, and their children; until our grandsons are ashamed to say—'I am an Englishman.'

"Now mind you this, my dear son, though you have little chance of doing it, fight you, tooth and nail, against the white-livered lot of Panclast. Who is he, by right of gab, and words no more English than himself, to upset the meaning of England, and the value of an Englishman? A change will come, among the changes he is always starting, when people will try to respect themselves; and finding it all too late for that, will turn against him, who has made it so. Then a very few men, without possessing any quality at all wonderful, except their love of their Country, may lay hold of the sense of our disgrace, and make it serve for common sense. Then good-bye to Mr. Panclast!

"Tommy, I wish that I might live, to see a son of mine bear share, in such an act of righteousness. But I hear your mother with the dinner ready, and I will go on about it, to-morrow."

* * * * *

The abruptness of this conclusion made me as sad almost as anything; although I do not see how my father, writing so much in prophetic vein, could have added anything of more precision, for my future guidance. I thoroughly understood his wishes, from the above brief sketch of them, and they agreed entirely with my own; so far at least as I had paid attention to such matters. Very few boys at school as yet, had made up their minds immutably,—as Sir Roland Twentifold had done already, and as every school-boy now does at once—what side in politics is the only right one, and how it may best be promoted.

As soon as we had the time, and spirit, to look round and think again, we could not help admiring, more and more, my father's wisdom. Not, by any manner of means, on account of the sum he had left for our benefit; though this turned out to be three times as much as my mother, in her most hopeful moments, had ever dreamed of finding it. It would be unnatural, if this had failed to increase her admiration; but she wished everybody to understand, that of that she thought nothing, in comparison with subjects so much higher. When coarse people said —"He has cut up grandly. My dear lady, I congratulate you, and your most interesting son, with all my heart;" she simply waved her hand, and said, "Sir, you can never have felt, as I do. Money is only an added trouble, when the guiding hand is gone, and gross exaggerations are made about it." And she felt most deeply the great injustice, and cruel hardship, of paying for probate a sum which made her weep again; because of the utter want of feeling, exhibited by the Revenue.

However, all this had one good effect, perhaps contemplated by the Revenue. To some extent, it helped to turn the channels of her grief towards indignation, as well as compelled her to look sharp, to baffle the harpies of the law, by all the resources of honesty. And so well did she

manage, with the aid of Mrs. Windsor, (who became a very dear friend now, and entered into all her righteous feelings) that much disappointment, and many low suspicions, rankled in the stony heart of Somerset House.

But that, which my mother, and myself, and even the lawyer whom we were obliged to employ, found the most remarkable, was the skill and forethought displayed by father, in the settlement of all trade-affairs. I need not go into particulars now; any more than I need state exactly the value of his net estate. Upon that point, there are always people, who know ten times as much as the acting executor can discover, and are not to be put down, by any process of sworn arithmetic; though as yet it had not become the duty of any public journal, to measure the depth of a dead man's pocket, and tell the world, how he divided it. It will be enough, for those who care to follow my humble fortune, to know that Kentish Town, Camden Town, Islington, and Ball's Pond were wrong—though they all agreed about it, and, if any stranger doubted, doubled it—in putting it at considerably over the sum of a hundred thousand pounds.

With regard to the Works, my father had provided that any Government contracts, taken before his death, should be executed; and if any more were offered, upon like terms, his Executors should accept them, so long as the Conservatives remained in office. But if, as he clearly anticipated, the Kingdom were over-run shortly by Radicalism and robbery, the long-established firm of Upmore was not to be associated with them. For they cut down contracts to the uttermost farthing, and no honest man could work under them. In that case, our works must be offered for sale, upon certain conditions, and terms, etc., all of which proved his wisdom.

But nothing proved his wisdom, and clenched his words, with a sledge-hammer power, so much as the speedy result upon his proviso about contracts. For fear of spoiling my education, and attaching a soapy smell to me, it was strictly declared, that I must keep away from meddling with a business, which I did not understand. This alone will show the

absurdity of the cries (now raised for party purposes) of "soap," and "dips," and "where's the grease-pot?"—with which I still have to contend, when I rise to address our enlightened operatives. My father had foreseen, I will not say all,—for no Jeremiah could have ever done that—but some of the mumbling, and blear-eyed decrepitude of the British nation, which now sets us longing to be Boers, or Zulus, or anything but what we unhappily are. And this foresight was shown in the result of the very next general election. The Radicals, (who are forced, by their own consciences, to set every other nation in the world before their own) came in with a rampant and blatant—the former to the friends of our country, and the latter to her foes—majority of six score at least.

No sooner was the result made known, with a mighty flourish of trumpets, and a proclamation of the Millennium, than a private and confidential circular was received by all substantial and enterprising Boilers. In it, the very ancient date of this typical firm was stated, as well as its rare advantages in position, and a thousand other things, including a vested right in Government contracts, and a certainty of being bought out, at a very noble figure, by the Committee of the new Cattle Market. Moreover, ashes were in great demand, for a newly formed Building-Company would take a million loads at once, to erect a thousand substantial villas, entirely upon, and for the most part of them.

Everything was going up and off, just then, like steam, and smoke, and bubbles mixed, as they used to be at our chimney-top. When a Liberal Government first comes in, it sets all knaves a-dancing; and even honest folk prick long ears up, at the infectious fanfarade of the great Rogue's March. There are certain to be, at once, bright summers, kindly winters, and vernal springs; and autumn will stand so thick with corn, that even the British farmer may have some hope, to get a gleaning. Trade shall flourish, bubble-companies abound; adulteration—alone of British industries,—be subsidised; and every foreign bullet, fired into the back of an Englishman, shall go back, ton for ton, in gold.

National securities went up, with the certainty that they might be sacked, without outlay in defending them; and commercial circles squared themselves, with the magic joy, which precedes the sure accomplishment of the impossible. Every sort of investment was in demand, and everybody expected ten per cent. on his capital, without posting it. Even Mr. Windsor, a stout old Tory, fell into the rush of the Liberal flood, and longed to buy my father's works; but my mother begged him not to do so, for she would have been loth to see him disappointed; and the price was high. She told him of my father's caution; and he wisely saw its force.

I am heartily glad, that it was so; for without that risk, our friend and neighbour lost as much as he could afford; when the usual relapse set in, from braggart talk, and swindling promise.

But while these were new, and bright, they served our turn, without fault of ours; and a Radical, of high faith, and sound cash, lost both—I am very sorry to say—in carrying on our fine old trade.

When these arrangements were complete, my dear mother carried out what she knew to be my father's wishes—though he had not found time to state them—by removing to a house upon Haverstock Hill, which stood in its own grounds, and saw as little of London as a "genteel villa" could wish to do; while the omnibuses passed our gate, every twenty minutes both to and fro.

Under the lawyer's advice, she bought this house, when she had tried it; and then she set up a cook, and housemaid, and a boy to do the knives, and a pony, twelve hands high, to carry me, when he went quietly, or to pitch me off, when he was cross. And, whatever the weather was, every day, by 'bus, or pony, or afoot, I went to Mr. St. Simon Cope; to learn the classics on week-days, and to hear him preach on Sundays. Until I became eighteen years old, and obliged to go to Oxford.

CHAPTER XXI.
THE SEAT OF LEARNING.

On the very day before I went to Corpus College, Oxford, my mother did a thing she had never done, nor allowed to be done before. She took me to the Standard-man, who was ready in fine weather then, at the corner of the road, (where people rest in going up the hill) to tell them how much they weighed and measured, for a penny apiece, and anything more they pleased.

My mother gave him twopence, which she said was such a lucky sum, that it might save all the ill effects, though Mr. Cope had assured her that there could be no harm done by it; and after great deliberation, with a view to sixpence, and measuring me round the chest—thirty-nine inches and a half, and levelling the top of my head at five feet six and three-quarters (to which I added two inches afterwards), he put me on his plate, and started backward in amazement.

"Must be zummat wrong with this here," he said; "no young gent, of that bigness, ever could draw under six stone six. There's plenty of grown up people does; but then they be dwarfs, or mites, or scrummies. But you be a fair-grown young gent, sir; taller, and bigger than the average of the British army, now-a-days; though not up to the size of the Peelers. Never can be true weight this. Ma'am, will you please step on, to try the machine? Twopence pays for two, you know."

"I am astonished, that you should think of such a thing," my dear mother answered, as she turned away; "I dare say, your machine is as right as usual. You don't buy, or sell, by it. Tommy, my dear, have your ticket printed; and come after me to our carriage-entrance."

"I puts you at eighteen, ma'am, eighteen stone, every pound of it;" the Standard-man called after her, and thereby lost the sixpence which I was holding in my hand for him; "but as for this young gent, if he ain't flying Tommy, as I've heer'd of,—my opinion is that he ought to be."

I was sorry to find, that the like opinion, or at least a suspicion to that effect, had already reached Oxford, long before I did. Mr. Cope had most kindly accompanied me, when I went up to matriculate; but certainly he would have kept strict silence, as to my sad affliction, unless he had thought it his duty perhaps, to speak of it confidentially to the Tutor appointed me by the College; and that appointment was rather a formal than a real matter in my time, and would scarcely be made, till I went into residence. I have known many men, who could not tell, which of the College-Tutors was their special Mentor; though in that respect, I was very lucky.

However that may be, I saw at once, when the College met for the term at Chapel, that in some way or other, my fame had outrun me; and I could not ascribe it to my mental gifts, which were by no means eminent. All the under-graduates looked at me, with warm but not rude inquiry; and even the Dons, from their lofty thrones, vouchsafed me sidelong glances.

And before very long, there was no doubt left; for the captain of the College Boat-club called upon me, quite early in the day, and apologized for self-introduction, on the score of public duty. As behoved a fresh-man, I was rather nervous in the presence of one so exalted; but he very soon set me at my ease; and as soon as the buttery was open, I sent for a tankard of Corpus ale, at his most kind suggestion. In a very pleasant manner, he drank my health, and said that he saw a great future before me, if I would only go in for it. I begged him to explain; which he did at once, after asking whether, as a Corpus-man, I would let him drop all formality. Being proud to be called a Corpus-man—*a lucus a non lucendo* nuncupative—I assured him once for all of my good-will, and freedom from little prejudices. Thereupon he stood up, and asked me to

do the same; and without further ceremony took me by the collar, and with one arm at full length, held me in the air, without even putting his lips together. At first, I was certainly surprised a little, having heard so much of Oxford etiquette; but the smile on his face reassured me.

"Noble!" he exclaimed, "even better than I hoped. Upmore, we shall be head of the river, four nights after the eights begin. And the beauty of it is, that you look quite unlike a feather-weight."

All this was far beyond my comprehension; and he laughed again, when I told him so.

"Why, of course, what I mean is, that we want a coxswain, and you are the very man for it. Our present man is two stone too heavy, as well as a bad hand at the lines. And no man fit for it came up, last term."

"What lines?" I asked, "I can say the Georgics, and all the odes of Horace, and the three first books of the '*Iliad*,' except the catalogue of ships; but I don't know what a coxswain is."

"We'll soon teach you the catalogue of ships," he answered, with a laugh at his own wit; "and the Corpus ship shall be the first. And as for not knowing what a coxswain is, you are all the better for that, because you can't have formed a bad style yet. Can you tell me exactly what your weight is? I should say well under eight."

Upon this point I satisfied him, by producing the ticket of the Standard-man; which exalted me yet more in his esteem.

"Six stone six," he cried; "and nearly forty inches round the chest! By Jove, what a stunning coxswain! And another pull we shall get out of you. With the wind astern, your head of hair will be as good as a lugsail; and with the wind ahead, we can reef it hard. My dear boy, what a blessing you will be, to old Corp first, and then to the University! No lectures to-day, as I suppose you know. I'll just go and tell the other men, what a wonderful piece of good luck has turned up; and then I'll go down to the barge with you. We'll have a day's practice with a fine old tub, and

if you can't steer pretty fairly by Hall-time, you're a much bigger muff than you look, and I'm no judge of fizzy—fizzyoggery. My name it is Green, as the poet observes; but you don't see much of it in my eye. Ta, ta, Upmore, for half an hour. Don't go out, till I come back. We'll fit you up with the water-toggery."

Mr. Green went down my stairs—for I lived in a garret of the highest quality—even quicker than I could have gone myself, though I gladly would have challenged him to a race up; and he chanted as he went a loud song of triumph; and all these things amazed me. What I had expected to find at Oxford, from the look of the place, and from what I had heard, was stiffness, formality, quiet, seclusion, and above all a Classic, and religious air.

Bill Chumps, of course, could have told me better; but through a number of causes, I had seen very little of him lately; and the last time we met, he had no idea that I was to go up so soon. Indeed, there had been a little misunderstanding, between the Chumpses and the Upmores. We had a sort of an idea, that since Bill got his double-first, and fellowship at Pope's Eye, he had not cared to come, and have his bit of dinner with us, altogether in the ancient way. Whereas Mr. Chumps, as I found out afterwards, sticking to business, as he always did, took it amiss—and unreasonably, I think—that when we went so high up Haverstock Hill, and the gate was a good one to turn in at, he was never even asked to send his cart, with the young man in blue, for orders. And what made it worse was, that Gristles, his foreman, had set up in business on his own account, not more than ten doors from the "*Mother-red-cap*," which was all in a straight drive from our place. So that when he came, hat in hand, and "solicited our custom," and old *Grip* knew him, and was greatly pleased to see him, my mother and I (without harbouring a particle of disrespect towards Mr. Chumps) pledged our faith, to let him call for orders.

There were other reasons as well, why Bill had only made a formal call upon us, since we came away from Maiden Lane. But, if I am to go through every little in and out, the course of my narrative will be as crooked, as the voyage of the pair-oar tub, when I first held rudder-lines on the Isis. Only it is possible, that Miss Windsor, (now grown up into a fine young lady), may have had something to do with it; not only because of Bill's tendency towards her, but because she happened to hear my mother say, when his double-first was announced to us, that he might thank his father's meat for it. No one should ever repeat a thing, said without spite, yet growing spiteful by mere repetition; even as transfusions, harmless at first, grow poisonous. And I am sorry to say, that Miss Windsor had not enjoyed, as she should have done, our going up the Hill.

This was the thing that pleased me most, of all I found at Oxford, that there never was any ill-will amongst us, back-biting, or scandal about one another. Every young man settled into his own set, whether by introduction, or connection, taste, or accident, or whatever it might be. If he took a dislike to any one—as young men ignorant of the world do, more than we old stagers,—he could drop his acquaintance very easily, without saying a word against him; and no resentment was shown, or felt. The two men happened not to suit each other. Each was likely to despise the other; but not to think any further harm of him. And when we did take to one another, I assure you it was something like. Among civilized people, there can be no warmer heart of friendship, combining the weakness of the school-boy, with the set strength of the man. And this was how I felt towards Green, who was the first to take me up; and that is how he has felt towards me, even to the time I write these words; and whatever I say about him, he will think as good as can be said.

When he took me down, to make a coxswain of me, his good nature, and high spirits, rendered my coaching, (as he called it) a pleasure, and a pride to me. He brought No. 7, whose name was Brown; and after rigging me out in a manner, which made me think how proud my mother would have been to look at me, they put me on the hindermost

seat of what they called a tub; but to me it appeared a most alarming vessel. However, I felt no fear of drowning, any more than a cork does; and before very long, I became quite happy. The beauty of the river, and the trees beside it, bright with the April of their hopes, and the meadows, where the grass began to dimple, as the light wind touched it, also the skimming of the boats around us, and the flashing of the feathered oar, together with the newness, and the freedom of the scene, exalted my spirits to the flying pitch.

But never again should I transcend the control of this earthly mass, through joy. Whenever the expansion of high spirits would lift me into the soaring vein, there comes the remembrance of what I did to my dear father,—and down goes all. Alas, all my rise into the air, since then, springs from a darker, and a deeper source, and one more active in the present age—honest wrath at roguery. But of that I knew nothing at Oxford; and little, until I became, against my own desire, mixed up with political, and national affairs.

With these heavy matters to carry through, I dare not linger as I would love, among the sweet memories of Oxford life. With a very few lessons, I learned enough to steer our Corpus eight, at practice first, and then in the momentous races, which began upon the 10th of May, that year. The fright I was in, that first evening of the races, was more than I can describe, and it makes me tremble now to think of it. But, with Green looking at me, as calm as a statue, and Brown behind him smiling, I gathered up my courage, and did my best, and we made our bump below the Gut. And I sent off a telegram to my mother, for the wires were just established then—"We have made our bump"—which the people in London turned into something ludicrous; but she knew from my letters what was meant.

I am told that Oxford men are now become addicted to total abstinence, —a craze unheard of in my time, save as a last resource for incurables. And even when we ran the Corpus flag to the top of the rope, as we did

very soon, and held a great supper in the captain's room, to celebrate this fine event, very few indeed of us could be fairly said to have crossed the large boundary of temperance.

Much of the glory was ascribed to me, who had earned it, only by inanity; of which, as a lofty merit, there were then far fewer instances than now. So often was my bodily welfare pledged, first in Champagne, and then in claret, and then in port-wine, and in rum-punch next, and finally in Champagne again, that the fusion of physical and psychical emotions plunged me at length into the last new science, whose name is "Hyle-Ideology."

Green, and Brown, and the rest of our oars were forbidden to exhibit mutuality, lest the Corpus flag should come down to-morrow; but the rudder fell under no such restrictions, and hard as I strove to maintain a stiff helm, it was more than any hand, and head, could do. However, they put me in a deep armchair, through the back of which they passed a curtain-rope. Then they gave me a tassel in either hand, and lifting ship and all, upon their heads, bore me with a favourable breeze to bed, while all of us chanted a nautical song. I steered the ship, throughout her course, with gravity so accurate, and so discreetly was she manœuvred, that she never once capsized. Now, this will show, whether any one of us could have had one drop too much.

After this, my popularity, not only in the College, but throughout the University, became so vast, that the difficulty was to get a bit of victuals in my own room. All my friends enjoyed my simplicity of mind, and Maiden Lane views of the world; which were not at all Socratic, Platonic, Stoic, nor even Academic. Moreover, they found me so glad to be taught, and so grateful, and unpretending, that they taught me every kind of light learning they knew; so that I got on wonderfully, in every study, never contemplated by Founders, and Benefactors.

Happily indeed for me, athletic contests were as yet most crude; otherwise my speed of foot before the wind would have hurried me into a world of troubles. We had a few College races, and even some rudiments

of University work; but as yet nothing powerful, and glorious. How should I have felt, after being chosen to run against Cambridge, for the hundred yards, the quarter of a mile, and the hurdle race, if there had been a stiff wind blowing in my teeth, at the starting-post? All this would have probably fallen upon me, if the athletic contests had then been in vogue; and I might have won everlasting fame, or base disgrace for ever.

As it was, I believed—though the whole is now forgotten—that I had established deathless fame, by steering the Oxford boat three times to victory over Cambridge. It was natural perhaps that I should be chosen for this distinguished honour, as the coxswain of the first crew on the Isis, and nearly two stone lighter than any other coxswain on the river, while looking as big as bow almost, and with some crews bigger. Yet from my low self-estimate, I was taken by surprise, when the captain of the University Boat-club wrote to me, and even begged me, for the sake of our University (which had been beaten three years running) to accept the office. Will a duck swim, will a dog bark, will a frog hop, will a Liberal run away? Without a moment's thought, I accepted; and thus began a course of triumphs for the stronger colour, which made the very cabmen shy of mounting the light-blue rosette.

CHAPTER XXII.
HEREDITARY LAWS.

What man has not described, or made believe to be describing, the race which the journals delight to call the "Inter-University Contest"? What marvel, that we have sold our birth-right to an acephalous mollusk, when the simple use of the tongue has passed into such headless mongreldom? Self-consciousness compels such creatures to befoul their origin.

I, Tommy Upmore, am not a bit better than any of my neighbours; not half so good as most of them—for I know my own faults, and I don't know theirs, or at any rate don't want to know them—but what should I be, if I hearkened to a foe, who takes out of me every gift of God, and turns me adrift, to act by nothing but the standard, apes have formed for me? "Truth is great, and shall prevail," he shouts; and to show her greatness, proves that she never did exist till now.

Happily, this stuff never troubled us, while I was at Oxford. We looked upon the chosen spirits of three thousand years, and more, as likelier to have left things worthy of our heed and sequence, than the half-taught men who spring up now, and by dint of smashing make a row. The *pudor*, and *verecundia*, of youth were still existing; and we looked up to our College Tutors, and University Lecturers,—men who had made a life-long study of the work they dealt with, who attempted not to gloze our minds with universal smattering, but forced us to learn of some few subjects what is knowledge, and what is not. And this was the distinction Mr. Cope had first tried to drive into me:

But no man, not di-cephalous—as some of our ancestors have been, according to the "Scientists"—can manage to serve two masters well; and being thus apprenticed to the river, I neglected the Aonian heights. My mother believed, and Mr. Cope assisted her in believing, that I might

have done very well in the Schools; though not so grandly as Bill Chumps. But I passed all examinations fairly, with my solid grounding, and in the final one obtained what was called "an honorary fourth." This satisfied my ambition; though some cuts at me have been made about it, by people who knew no better.

Grip, who had been, for so many years, my trustful and trustworthy friend, and had taken the warmest interest in my trencher-cap (which he cracked up) and leading-strings (which he pulled off) was immensely pleased with my bachelor's gown, although himself a Benedict. Throughout the whole of my first term, Mr. Luker, the celebrated dogman, had kept his brain at boiling-point (as he confessed most frankly, when I became his admiring client) to make this noble dog his own. With the choicest liver, he waylaid him, and the sweetest female blandishments; and *Grip*, with either dewlap laughing, accepted all kind overtures, but enfeoffed himself to none of them. At last, a very large sack was made of tarred material, treble thick, and *Grip* (overcome by his love of the beautiful) was inveigled into it. But no sooner did he find his tail shut in, and feel the Philistines on him, than he rent their toils, like a bursting shell, and flew among them, like a charge of grapnel. Thereupon Mr. Luker came to me, and explained his disappointment about the dog; and assured me, that if he could only have got him, he might have made a hundred pounds of him—to go to Egypt, and do more than England can, put courage into the native animal. And he undertook, if I would come to terms, to pledge his sacred word of honour, that "neither himself nor any other gentleman, in Oxford, or in London, should interfere with the honesty of the dog." Alas, poor dogs, whose honesty depends upon that of their master!

Then Mr. Luker set before me, in words whose eloquence I cannot reproduce, the loss, not only personal but national, not only national but universal, if *Grip* were allowed to depart this life, without issue, legitimate and guaranteed. To him, the survival of the race of *Grip* was of infinitely greater moment, than the continuation of the blood of Shakespeare, or Sir Isaac Newton. "Men comes, and they goes," he said,

"and the Dooce himself couldn't pick half the ins and the outs of them. But when it comes to dogs, Mr. Up, you can follow the breed, as true as their own noses is."

So we came to a compact,—that he, understanding this elevated subject thoroughly, should provide, for old *Grip*, as meet a consort as knowledge of the dog-world might produce; and that I should have the pick of baby *Grips*, whenever I gave a certificate of race, as soon as each family was two months old. Thus I was enabled to fulfil old promises made to sundry friends, especially Sir Roland Twentifold, and Jack Windsor. And I always knew, which pup to choose, by following the law of paternity among dogs, that the father growls most at his noblest son.

Perhaps it was good for us both, (for surely I was idle enough without him) that my old friend, Sir Roland, had made up his mind, to have nothing to do with Oxford.

"When the institutions of the Country are in danger," he said, the last time he came home from Harrow, "a man in my position must not waste three years. The very week after I am twenty-one, I shall be returned for Twentibury. Toggins will vacate the seat, to order; I shall stick to it, till there is a vacancy for the county; and then we put Toggins in again. Upmore, it is quite right that you, who have never been out of leading-strings, should go into them for three years more, and get among fellows who may do you good. But for me, it would be folly to waste three years, and know less at the end than when I began. Why, at twenty-one I should be a 'Junior Sophist,' or whatever they call a man who has passed his Little-go; and I should have to wait a great deal longer, if I meant to equal Chumps. I don't want to equal Chumps; he is a wonderful fellow, and I mean to make him useful. But that is not my line of life. I don't care a penny for the Classics; but I care, every penny I possess, for the reputation of my Country."

And when he came to see me at Oxford, (as he did, one Summer-term) his talk was chiefly to the same effect. "I am afraid you are a very lazy lot," he said; "you don't seem to me, to have anything to live for, except

to play cricket, or pull, or smoke, or spoon upon girls in confectioners' shops"—this was meant for me, who had taken him to see, what lovely brown eyes a very nice girl had, at a place where we ate ices; but Master Roland (clever as he thought himself) little knew why I admired those brown eyes; which I may, or may not, have time to explain hereafter —"and when you have done all that, and yawned, and perhaps played a horn out of the window very badly, or cards yet worse, you can go to bed, as happy as if you had done a great day's good. Pish! I am very glad I never joined you. I want bigger games than yours."

This made me feel unhappy, as if I were despised; whereas the wise men of all ages have continually told young men, to take their enjoyment while they can; going far towards proving, at their own expense, that folly has more joy than wisdom. But Sir Roland did not mean all this; and I took it for nothing but his way of talking; because he would have liked to be among us, but saw that he had thrown the chance away. My idea of life was, to spend as much of it for other people's benefit as they permit—in which matter they are most contrary—and the rest for my own good, with honest enjoyment, and the certainty of better things to come; if I do not labour chiefly to anticipate them here. And when I say my own good, I mean, of course, the good of my Country, and relatives, and friends; without which my own could not very well exist.

And after all, politics are a very small part of the general life of most of us. Unless our character becomes involved, and our self-respect grows downward, (like a troublesome toe-nail, that affects our walk) by reason of base things done in our name, against our consent and conscience; and unless we see things given away, which our fathers gave their lives for; and unless we are plagued by nursery Acts of Parliament, very good for the unbreeched—it matters but little to most of us, whether the First Lord of the Treasury be a Conservative, or a Liberal. With such things I never troubled my head, even when I grew to be a Bachelor of Arts; until Sir Roland Twentifold came driving me about them, and his strength of will was tenfold mine.

"Roly," I said, when I had kept my "Master's term," and enjoyed it rarely among old friends, without a stroke of work; "you will never get a bit of good out of me. I am not eloquent, I have no gift of speech; I tried it at the Union once, and when everybody cried out, 'Bravo, Tommy!' I could only laugh, and thank them, and sit down. If my father had been a Rad, when he brought me up, (as he had been in his early days) no doubt I should have been a sound Rad too. And for that matter, so would you, I do believe, if you had been brought up to it. I know at least a dozen very honourable Rads, some of them very clever fellows too; who would no more think of doing anything mean, if they had the government of the Country, than you would yourself, if you had it all your own way. Then, why should we cry out, before we are hurt?"

"Because it's too late to cry out, when we are. What you say is true enough, my good Tommy. Those friends of yours are all honourable enough, individually, I dare say—though the less you have to do with them the better—but when they fall under the dominance of party, what becomes of all their scruples? They sink their own wills, they efface themselves—according to the expression now in vogue—they fall under one imperious mind; and no difference is left between black and white. My father kept hounds, as you have heard me say; and when I was a small boy, I rode my pony with them. There was one most obstinate old stager of the pack, who had a wonderful nose while he was young, and had taken the lead of all of them. But when he grew old he went all abroad; yet the rest had to follow him all the same, on a false scent, more often than a true one. At his dictation, all the younger ones, from habit, sank their own better perceptions, and loyally rushed after sheep, or donkeys, or anything he gave tongue to. But all these things we can talk of better, when you come down; as you must, next month. You have only been once to us, since you lost your father, more than five years ago. And my mother always says, when I go home, 'Have you brought Ariel with you, at last?'"

"How wonderfully kind she has always been to me!" I answered, liking soft thoughts, better than the hard flash of politics; "if she wishes to see me again, my duty is to go to her."

"Well, that is one way of putting it! A painful duty, my dear Tommy? We will try to make it a pleasant one. You can't shoot; though people shoot at you, when you take a flying fit. Come down in July, and stay three months, and I'll make you a first-rate shot, by the time the partridges are ready. You learn everything, like smoke, you see. I'll back you to beat Counterpagne on the first; though he has been at it all his life."

"You forget one important point," I answered, hoping that the objection might not prove fatal. "When a gun goes off, it kicks very hard, they tell me. And it seems too probable, that it would kick me over."

"Not a bit of it, if you lean forward. You are easy to take up, but you are not at all easy to put down, Master Tommy. You are as quick as lightning, to begin with. Nature has provided you with that, no doubt, to atone for your want of thunder. Don't be always running down yourself. There are very few fellows who can do what you can; even if you have altogether dropped your wings, through the gross feeding of these Oxford butteries. But I mean you to put on your wings again. I have a whole lot of things for you to do; and flying is a most essential part. Professor Megalow is coming down; now that I am of age, and all that sort of thing, he can stop at the Towers, as long as he likes. I am sorry to inform you, that he is a Rad. But a man of his size may be anything he likes, without being any the worse for it. I intend to consult him about you, Tommy, how we may launch you on the clouds again."

"I have not seen him for years," I said; "if he is going to be there, 'twill be enough to make me fly again."

CHAPTER XXIII.
A COUNTY MEETING.

How easy it is, for a good-natured man to be taken for the opposite; and yet how hard for ill-natured people, to put on the guise of kindness! Not that the world is distinctly divided into those two classes; for the greater part of it have mixed natures, and are operated on by the mixture.

There scarcely could be any one with a better nature, than Sir Roland Twentifold. He was large-hearted, quick-hearted, soft-hearted too, (when touched at the proper fibre) and yet any Radical stranger who met him, would have thought him the opposite of all these. He had private, and personal motives, (which he disdained to speak of, as being too small; yet perhaps they were the spring of everything) for strongly abhorring what he called, "the faction now ruining this Country." I never could believe that any faction would be so factious, as to harm their Country, knowingly, and of set purpose. Yet this he believed, from the bottom of his heart; and it cannot be denied, that their words, and deeds, have gone far to bear out his assumptions.

It must have been the third week in July, and the prime of a glorious summer—such as we never are blest with now—when I had the happiness of visiting, once more, the noble Towers-Twentifold. The woods, and the hills, and the meadows, and even the hollow places that faced the north, had cast away the shivers, yet preserved the freshness, of the cooler time of growth. Many of the fields were lined, or hillocked, with the peaceful tide of hay, which is late in coming into harbour there; while, upon the forward slopes, green corn was wavering into fluent pathways for the wandering wind. And among all the view of the land, flowed in that faint reflection from the distant sea, which looks as if light threw a shadow of itself.

Blessed was this neighbourhood, to have no railway, out-shrieking the sea-gulls, out-reeking the whale, and even out-roaring the sea in a storm! The station was so far away, that good sound people let their journeys depend very much upon the weather; which is the proper thing for them to do. And after the abominable rush of London—which never should make any fuss about smells, that it never has time to blow its nose at—there came into my heart such a quietude of comfort, that I begged the groom, who was sent to fetch me—Sir Roland being absent at a county meeting—to drive as slowly as the horse would go.

For several years now, I had been as happy as anybody ought to wish to be. I had plenty of money, (through my father's labour, and my mother's liberality) to keep myself, and to help a friend, without wasting any upon that third desirable object (in Solon's opinion) the punishment of an enemy. I was blest with plenty of friends, but cursed as yet with no single enemy; and though many of my friends were poor, they had too much pride to sponge on me, beyond the mere fringe of a Turkish towel. I had liked a great number of girls, here and there, in a strictly moral and moveable way, so as never to get any heart-ache about them, any more than they got it about me. And as for Polly Windsor, who had seemed to be marked out, by the finger of commerce, as my bride, she had certainly shown herself kind and obliging, after we moved into our new house, and had helped my dear mother to spend much cash, in adorning it with hideous devices.

But, as soon as Bill Chumps came back from Oxford, with his double-first, and his six feet two, to read for the Bar at Lincoln's Inn, she became too personal—and I might say bodily—in her sentiments, to suit my taste.

"Do you mean to grow any more, Tommy?" she had asked, as if love were a question of inches; "why Mr. Chumps must be a foot more than you are; though you have got your heels three inches high."

"On account of the curve of my foot," I answered; and she knew what I meant, though too delicate to say it; for her feet were like a pair of soles, without any right and left to them. And this made another little breach between us.

Moreover, there was now in my mind, as there always had been indistinctly, the remembrance of a pair of sweet brown eyes, which used to grow bright, and dim, with mine, in the joy, and grief of early days. I knew, without thinking about it, that Laura Twentifold was far above me; far out of sight beyond poor me, in birth, and beauty, and goodness. Also I knew, that she was intended to marry her cousin, the Earl of Counterpagne; for the good of the family, and of the kingdom too. None the more for that, could I help longing to see what she was like, now time was come for her to be quite a full-grown young lady, with a will of her own, as I heartily hoped, and a kind recollection of her old playfellow. Since the time of the whale, I had never beheld her, except in a great many dreams of the night; because she had been sent from home, to learn foreign language, and every accomplishment.

The dinner-bell was ringing, as we drove up to the door; for her ladyship held by the good old fashions, and would have no new-fangled gong in the house; and I had only a quarter of an hour, to make ready. So that I was not at all done up, to my liking, failing to find—as always happens in a hurry—some of the things that were most becoming. This flurried me, doubtless, and heightened my colour, so that I blushed at my own red cheeks. But anything was better, as my own sense told me, than to keep ladies waiting, for an unimportant young chap like me.

When I entered the drawing-room, Lady Twentifold, looking more beautiful, and sweet than ever, came up, and took me by both hands, and with all the friendliness of early days, touched my forehead with her smiling lips. At her graceful condescension, tears gleamed in my eyes; and she took them for the thanks I could not utter. Then Professor Megalow, with his gentle stateliness enhanced by the silver now appearing in his curls, shook hands with me cordially, as if I had been

his equal, and said some of the pleasant things, which were always ready for his pleasant voice. I could not help feeling ashamed of myself, having never done anything to deserve such friends.

"We must call him 'Ariel' no more, I fear," Lady Twentifold said to the Professor, with a smile; "we must get you to invent a new name for him, out of the depths of your palæontology."

"I think we must allow him to name himself; as some of my animals have had to do. What shall we call you, my old confederate?"

"Everybody seems to call me Tommy," I answered, finding this the truth; "and it sounds more natural than any other name. One of the examiners forgot himself, and called me Mr. Tommy, in the Schools, instead of Mr. Upmore."

"Then come, Mr. Tommy," Lady Twentifold replied, "and let me show you an old friend, whom you have not seen, I think I may say, ever since you were my Ariel. Laura, do you know who this is?"

The loveliest maiden the eye could light on, even in a flight among the angels, came forward from the shelter of the summer curtains, and looked at me, with shy surprise. It was a very short look; and yet it has lasted in my heart all life, and will last there through all future life.

Each of us wanted to say something; but neither knew exactly what to say. So we only shook hands, and waited for the easier times of talking.

"We never wait for Roland, now he is so busy," our hostess said to the Professor; "he has scarcely time to feel the necessity, which others feel, for nourishment. When he is an older politician, he will not live entirely on politics."

"Zeal is the great point, in any pursuit," he answered, as she took his arm; "unhappily it cools too often, before it is replaced by habit. But in his case, it will not be so. He has more than zeal; he has constancy."

"Sometimes, I wish that he had less;" Lady Twentifold answered, with a little sigh, while her daughter came for my timid guidance; "when there are so few of us, it seems hard that the public should claim so large a part."

We dined in a snug little room, and at an oval table I believe; for our small company would have looked forlorn, in the grand old dining-room. For my part, though the Professor talked, as he did when he chose, most wonderfully, with rapid turns of pleasant thought, and leaving, for slower minds, suggestions to bear fruit at leisure, I remember nothing but the smiles, and gaiety, his bright humour spread. The smiles especially I rejoiced in—not my own, but sweeter ones, which thus I had the happiness of watching, and sometimes of sharing in. Are not all sweet smiles the offspring of a sweet reflection; and therefore can they be complete, until themselves reflected? Beautiful Laura, at every smile, looked up for me to share in it; and thus our eyes made bright acquaintance, and our minds went on together, without any need of words. And every now and then, she asked me some little question about myself, which made me proud to be myself, for the sake of such fair memory.

Just when the dinner was over, the youthful master of the house came in, and after the proper apologies, told us that he had glorious news that day. Toggins, the member for Twentibury, had been brought to see the error of his ways at last; being led, however lamely, to wholesome repentance, by a very serious attack of gout. His first righteous act had been to sit up in bed, and sign an undertaking to apply for the Chiltern Hundreds, at once; so that the writ might be issued, before the Prorogation in August. According to Sir Roland, he ought to have made that application a year ago and more, in fact upon the very day when the heir became of age. But Mrs. Toggins, who had a good deal of money, liked the M.P., behind his name, and urged him to forego the only honourable course. What can be done with a warming-pan, that slips out of its handle?

"Here it is, mother! He can never get out of that;" my dear friend shouted, as he cast an unfolded letter among the glasses; "I got hold of his doctor, and his parson too. Could his Colchicum work, when his conscience would not? And between us, we beat the old lady altogether; and she now declares, that it is all her doing. Ah, that's what I call a county meeting. Something like 'organization' there! He began to get better, with alarming rapidity, as soon as the weight was off his mind; and I promised him the best glass of port he ever tasted, if he would dine here, on the day of my return. Then I thought it safer, to set off with this. I have had my dinner, let me drink his good health."

Professor Megalow was delighted with all this young enthusiasm; for anything natural always pleased him, whether it were Radical, or Tory. And Sir Roland's sister, who loved him dearly, got up, and embraced, and kissed him. But his mother tried vainly to look glad, and said the very things she thought and felt, according to her loving, and simple nature.

"I am trying to be glad, for your sake, Roly; because you have so long wished for this. And no doubt it is right, that a gentleman should keep his promise, as he has done at last. I suppose that the Country has a claim upon you, as you say, and feel so deeply; at the same time, I think it might have left you to me, for a few more years at least. There is nothing particularly bad going on just now, that I am aware of; and even Mr. Panclast seems to promise a great deal more mischief, than he carries out. If there were any great national disgrace for you to stop, I would gladly spare you, even if I had to sit up all night. But when there is nothing—not even for a man to marry his sister—why should you work so?"

"Because," said Sir Roland, "it is too late to begin, when a thing is over. The most reckless lot that ever held the reins, or flung them on the horse's back, and lashed him, are now in power—and what sort of power? The power to go at a furious pace, without caring how many people they drive over, or what neck they break, except their own. No

power to stop, and consider their course, or regard the ancient landmarks, and no care how they smash up a fine old coach, not a stick of which belongs to them. Professor Megalow, I beg your pardon. I forget things, when I get excited."

"That is better than remembering them;" the Professor replied with a courteous bow; "we have never had a great legislator, who did not begin with strong prepossessions."

This, and the sense of his own mistake, brought the young host to his manners again. The ladies departed gracefully, and we had no more politics; but a great deal of far more interesting things, including some soft sweet songs from Laura; until my friend took me, to smoke a pipe with him, in his own little room, before going to bed.

"Now, we can say what we please," he began, after giving me his own pet meerschaum, which he had begun, in strict confidence, at Harrow. "What strange things we do come across! How can such a great man as the Professor ever have become a Liberal? I shall spare some of them, for his sake, while I slash at the party in general. To my mind it seems almost to prove, that some of them must have high principles, though they keep them out of their performances. No, thank you, no cigars for me! A pipe soothes me, a cigar only irritates; I like to see the fruit of my own works, not to cast away the root, when done with. And now, my dear Tommy, the next job is to bring you in for North Larkmount. Larkmount is a fine constituency, consisting of honest freemen, or at least they always turn the poll. But we can't get you in, just at present, I'm afraid. However, that won't matter much. I shall not say a word this Session; but see how they do things, and get acclimatised."

"But I don't want to get in at all," I said; "or at any rate, not for a long time yet. I would rather enjoy myself, for a year or two, and be an M.A., before being M.P."

"Not so. You must buckle to, at once. I have arranged it all, with the greatest care. Not another Session must be lost, before I have you, and Chumps, to back me. The enemy have several evil works on hand, and they will invent a lot more in the holidays. I shall have in Chumps for his great abilities; and you, beloved Tommy, for your flying powers."

"I do not like that way of putting it at all;" I replied, with my usual frankness. "I cannot fly now, any more than you can. And if I could, they would not let me, in the House of Commons."

"That shows how much you know about it. If you had been up in the gallery, as I have, to see what they were at, night after night, you would know that they were as larky as a lot of schoolboys. I got Professor Megalow down here, as he thinks, because of the *pelvis* (or whatever he calls it), of a mighty dragon, in the cliff at Happystowe. But really, and truly, my dear friend, that he might put you on your wings again, or else show me the proper way to do it."

"Then you have behaved very badly," I exclaimed, "and not like a friend, but a selfish politician."

CHAPTER XXIV.
OLD BONES, AND YOUNG ONES.

So much was I vexed at this idea, that Sir Roland Towers-Twentifold valued me, only as a flying puppet, a machine to be started from a spiral spring, or a little boy's coloured balloon, that I assure you, although I was on a bed soft as a dew-cloud—for we did not lie upon cast-iron yet—scarcely a wink of sleep came near me, without being scattered into a fire-wheel of dreams. If it appeared to me a small thing—as it did in modest moments—that I should be brought from London, like a tailor to take orders, or a fellow to exhibit Punch, and Judy—yet how could I reconcile it with the fitness of things, that Professor Megalow should be tempted, with the very biggest dragon for his bait, to come down, upon the really ignoble errand of flipping me up, like a pith-ball of elder, between the plates positive and negative.

At first I thought of consulting him, as to what I should do in the morning; for who else could advise me, so kindly, or so well? But I saw that his counsel was not to be had, without a disclosure of everything; and I had no right to tell him of his own "mission" here. So that on the whole, I was compelled to act, (as I nearly always find to be the case with me) by the dim light only of my own perceptions. "I have no right to make any scene," I thought; "neither is it possible for me to leave abruptly, without giving reason; Lady Twentifold has been most wonderfully kind to me, ever since she first saw me; and she can have no paltry political motive, such as this one-idea'd Roland has. And then there is beautiful Laura, sweet Laura—I suppose I ought to call her Miss Twentifold, but consider the years I have known her—there never has been anybody like her, since the days of Paradise, and how dreadfully rude I should appear to her! Of course, I must never think of her at all, any more than I might of the pole-star. Still, I should like her to think of

me, if she ever deigns to do it, with all kindness and good-will. Ah, ha! Lack is the luck! I am a most unhappy fellow. My mother said once, that I had no right to be born; and who should know so well as she?"

But before I had quite finished "doing my hair"—as the ladies express it, and mine very often took almost as long as a lady's to do, because of there being so much of it,—Sir Roland came thumping my dressing-room door, and with his usual impetuosity, rushed in.

"Tommy, shake hands, like a man," he exclaimed, "or I'll pull all your hair out of trim again. You cut up, as rough as a clinker, last night; the first time I ever saw you out of temper. However, a new hope sprang up in my breast. Do you know what you did, as you went along the passage?"

"No. I remember nothing, except that I said to myself—'I am not a machine, and I won't be treated as a machine. If he only wants me as a Jack in the box——'"

"A Tommy in the box, you mean. No, no. You must lay aside all those small ideas. It is not I that want you, it is your Country, your noble, but outraged Fatherland. Those are the sentiments that should exalt you, instead of petty wrath against your ancient friend. But I see a new provision in the laws of gravitation—which Panclast will bring in a bill to abolish, before we are very much older. In your anger, you tried to stride loftily, as behoves the most illustrious of all coxswains; but instead of so doing, you never touched the ground! You flitted, without any coarse agency of legs; like the ghost of Achilles, at the great deeds of his son."

"Well, I thought there was something unusual about it," I answered, without any heroism; "but my mind was so occupied with its wrongs, that I never noticed how I walked."

"That is another most excellent sign. Temporary absence of perception. The main point will be, to enlarge the indignation—to ennoble it, to make it national, instead of individual. Your course of reading at Oxford —even though you read nothing there at all, except novels—has

produced, in your system, a fundamental change. In your early days, exhilaration carried you over the heads of the public. You have seen too much of the world by this time, to be exhilarated any more. Joy can no more elevate you; and Nature (rejoicing as she does in exceptions) has found a fresh way, to keep you in the list. But a perilous turn of the balance for you, I am sadly afraid, dear Tommy. Joy is not frequent, even in the days of boyhood. But indignation—oh, Tommy, Tommy, what a lot of lead pipe you must carry round you, if you once become liable to leave the earth, every time you see wrong being done upon it!"

"Clear out," said I; "I want to finish dressing, and not to be plagued with immoral reflections. If you want to spare me all that lead pipe, regulate your own conduct first, by the lofty standard you want to bring me up to. That little business about Toggins, for instance, might force me to put on a pound or two; though a lily-white act, in comparison with the things you do at election-time."

To enter into that matter did not suit him, while in his present fine vein of morality; so that he only made a face—being still a boy, as much as I was—then he pulled in his tongue, and tapped his lips, and said,

"Not a word about that, to the Professor, mind. I have boasted to him, about the purity of everything; and he has promised to come and be gratified. And gratified he shall be, by everything that is noble. Now look alive! I shall have a busy day to-day. I mean to go canvassing, though of course I need not do it. But I am sure, that the women would be angry, if I didn't; and with this clash of changes coming, it is not only wise, but necessary, to keep them on our side, as they are by nature. If nothing else showed the Conservative cause to be the true one, it would be enough that the women always take to it."

With this, which moved me a great deal more than the rest of his arguments put together, he set off to shave himself, which he insisted upon doing, now and then, with a competent eye to the future. And no

sooner was he gone, than I set to, to get everything about me into the proper place, that I might not be taken, at breakfast-time, for a young man at all of a Radical turn.

This made me late, though I had got up very early; earlier than any other of the party, except Professor Megalow; and when I came in, he was describing, with his usual clearness and quietness, the object of his labours.

"It is still *in situ*, in the composite bed, none of which is of hard material; and indeed it would be easier to extricate it perfect, if the matrix were more consistent. We shall want a very careful hand to-day; and at the same time, light feet under it. Unhappily, I am a little above the proper scientific stature; neither can I any longer claim the flexibility of my earlier days. Unless I can secure a very able coadjutor, such as I once had the good luck to obtain, there will be great risk of injuring one of the finest specimens of the noble Deino-Saurians, I have ever had the fortune to behold. Let me try to describe to you the exact position, which makes the extraction so difficult."

This he did so well, that I could see the place; though without any idea of the treasure it contained. He asked if he might take some dry toast, and with it built up a rough resemblance of the cliff, and excavation; then he lodged, in the back of the hole, three joints of a prawn, to represent the relics of the monster, and shored up the crumbling of the toast, with a stump of lead-pencil, and some sprigs of parsley.

"The position is rather precarious, you perceive," he said to Lady Twentifold, and her daughter, who watched his frail structure with great interest; "and of the people you sent most kindly, to help me yesterday morning, intelligent as they were, and very obliging, there is not one who goes into this bower, without some trembling, and a superstitious awe. They are not so much afraid of the cliff falling on them, as of the outrage they fancy they are doing, to some unknown gigantic power. 'Could he eat me, sir, if he come to life again?' the bravest and biggest of them asked me; one of your under-keepers, I believe. 'Certainly he could, if he

were carnivorous,' I was obliged to answer; and that last word frightened them, beyond all former fear. Now, I could extract this grand relic by myself, for I am not beneath average human strength, if I ventured to make more headway; but you see that in brittle material, such as this, I am afraid that the whole might fall suddenly, and perhaps destroy the beauty of the specimen. And even without that, I want another hand, most sadly; it need not be a very strong one, for I would bear the weight of this—the heavier end; but it must be a hand that does not shake, as I am sure the bold gamekeeper's would."

"Why, I will come, and help you with the greatest pleasure," exclaimed Sir Roland, "and obey every whisper. My canvass at Twentibury will do to-morrow. This is of infinitely more importance."

"It is most kind of an eager politician," the Professor answered, with a grateful smile, "to show such preference for the bygone world. But alas! my dear friend, you are much too tall. There is no room for you, at that end of the cave."

"Then, Professor Megalow, may I go with you?" Miss Twentifold asked, with her lovely eyes sparkling. "I am not very strong; but my hand is steady, and I should enjoy it so. Dear mother, say that I may go and help. I would put on my shrimping-dress, and a thick cloak."

I could not help looking at her with alarm; while I did not yet like to out-bid her for her wish. Lady Twentifold glanced at her with pride, but serious misgivings about the risk. And the Professor firmly answered "No!"

Being thus relieved, I was only too glad to offer my services, which were at once accepted.

"Tommy is the lad cut out, by nature, for this very operation," the Professor said kindly, as he took my hand, which was hardened by long use of the rudder-lines; "he is a model of strength, so far as light weight

permits; and his lightness of touch has long been proved. If I had my pick of the young men of England; for a job like this, I should choose our Tommy."

"But I may come, and see it, without being in the way. I am sure Mamma will let me do that," cried Laura; "and the Professor cannot be hardhearted, if he tries. And I particularly want to go to Happystowe to-day."

"If you will be burdened with her, she may go," Lady Twentifold said to her visitor; "and I should like to join you in the afternoon, or meet you perhaps upon your way back; for I must be at home, till two o'clock."

Things were soon ready, and we three set off, in a light waggonette, for Happystowe; and but for one thing, it would have been hard to say, which of the three was the happiest. The Professor, with his bag of sacred tools, was glowing with the prospect of a mighty prize, in his special field of glory, and the tangible proof of his own inductions, published in a treatise ten years ago. His fair companion was beaming with the brightness of her own youth and beauty, and the joy of the air, and of a day among the rocks, with her sketch-block and her shrimping-net. But I, by reason of that one thing, I was happier than three times three, or nine times nine of all their happiness. A fig for the science, and the old dry bones, the traces of the lubbers that deformed the earth—for they were too big only to disfigure it—till beauty was created, to make them die of shame. And a fig even for the blue sky, and gray sea, and brown rocks standing up to be painted; if only I might watch Laura's face —without any token of doing so—catch the glint of a smile that began far away, and sometimes receive to the home of my heart a gaze of good-will, all intended for me.

I would gladly have dwelt in that happy waggonette, till all the old dragons came to look for their bones, with Laura sitting by my side and laughing, and often saying very simple things, and the Professor opposite, to balance us, enjoying (as he always did) the company of the young, and nodding in his humorous way, for me to explain to this

young lady some of his less recondite terms, as if I were an acolyte, at least, of science. He did it on purpose, I am very well assured; because he perceived the condition of my heart, and desired to promote it by the action of the mind. Being steadfastly Liberal, and taking a very large view of genealogy, he discovered no unfitness of things whatever, in my tendency to a deep tenderness, towards a member of the race so far above me.

But that most delicious drive was gone in no time, as everything delicious is. We put up, of course, at the "*Twentifold Arms*," where several of the maids remembered me, and Mrs. Roaker was most generous. And it seemed to me one of the most delightful traits in the character of Professor Megalow, that he should be so wholly wrapped up in his tools, as to make it my duty to hand Miss Twentifold, down the three steps of that fortunate carriage. She never said—"Oh no, thank you; I have my bag to hold; and I can get down very well," as girls do generally, whom it is a very small privilege to help down. But she gave me her beautiful hand, with her beautiful foot on the step, and her beautiful eyes for a moment met mine; so that altogether I was quite overpowered with the sense of beauty, and—which is yet greater in the end—of goodness.

The Professor's face wore a truly scientific air, as he noticed these things, for nothing ever really escaped him; and he rubbed his nose gently, as he gazed at the far offing, as if he had descried there a palæozoic ship.

CHAPTER XXV.
ON THE ROCKS.

Few and far apart the days are, such as came out of the heaven just then, when the stoutest Briton, and his wife, can find no hole ready-made, or to be well picked, in the weather. And what is the good of the finest weather to him, if he employs it in picking holes in his friends, or his enemies, or even in himself? But any one, who loves large ways and thoughts, or even little ways, when they are good-natured, might have looked with true pleasure, at the Professor for the first, and at Laura and me, for the latter enjoyment.

Professor Megalow heartily enjoyed the company of young people, and old hats; and to-day, he had put his great head into a hat, with very good reason to assign for it, of fine archæological interest. And even if things had been as adverse with me, as they were for the moment prosperous, no moderate misery could have held its own, against the influx of his geniality. He marched on before us, to the haven of his hopes, with a long forked tool upon his shoulder, and a bag of learned organs in the other hand, and he never turned round, unless we called upon him; which proved the perfection of scientific insight.

"Oh, how I should like to be like him!" said Laura; "but I never can carry a long name long. I learn to pronounce them, and to try to know their meaning; and then the next day, I am as wise as ever. Nearly all the young ladies now are so scientific. As one of the books says, it is such a manifold addition to their interests."

"Not to the interest felt in them;" I answered, though afraid of my own words. "It makes them so conceited, and so full of their own ideas. And they talk, as if they knew everything, with the little bits they pick up from books. That is not the way great men get on. They get on, by their own observations, and experiments, and by putting this and that together;

and so they make great discoveries. And when they have done it, they are always humble, because of the quantity they can't find out. Look at our dear friend there! Does he ever pretend to know anything at all? Does he ever lay down the law about anything? Even upon subjects, he understands more thoroughly than any other man yet born, he speaks (when he does speak at all) with more doubt, and diffidence, and humility, than a school-girl does, who knows nothing about it, except from one of his own books. The smaller the mind, the more positive it is."

"Then ladies ought to be very positive—at least I mean most of them, like me. But how slowly we are walking! The Professor will think, that we have no zeal for his bones at all. Whereas I fully mean to go in, and help."

"I hope you won't think of doing that," I answered, as we turned the corner, and could see the excavation; "unluckily, you were not entrusted to me, or I should forbid it most decidedly. It looks rather dangerous, and is sure to be very dirty; and what good can you do in there?"

"What good can I do anywhere, if it comes to that? I came here, to see everything, and I mean to do it, unless the Professor forbids it, and he would not have let me come, if he intended that. Let us go and ask him. No, he is too busy!"

His attention was wholly engaged, as we saw, and he was speaking earnestly to the man, who had been left in charge of the place, last evening.

"You see no difference," he said; "I do, and a very considerable difference, Barnes. There has been no rain in the night, and no groundswell to produce any vibration. Your shores are all standing, it is true, but not quite as they stood yesterday. We must have three hours more of work in there, before I have exhausted the *situs*; and I would not allow any man to come in with me now. Tommy, keep away, and take Miss Twentifold. I shall have to collect all my forces, and shore up

afresh, before I dare use a tool. The cliff is quite low, but too high to be safe; and there is a public footpath along the top. The tide is going out; in half an hour, you might get some good shrimping round the point. Allow me to commend that pursuit to you, for the next two or three hours."

"You are going in and out, yourself," I said, though I took good care to lead Miss Twentifold away; "as if there were no sign of danger whatever. But if we should do more harm than good, the best plan would be to go shrimping, as you say. But how shall we know, sir, when you are ready for us,—or at least for me, of course, I mean? Lady Twentifold will be down, perhaps, about three o'clock."

"When all is made safe, and I want your good hand," the Professor answered, with a look at me, and a wave of his faithful old hat to the lady, (which said—for all his hats said something—"I like you very much, but I don't want you now") "you will see, my dear friends, this conspicuous example of the industry of the Orient, waving on that pole."

He pulled from his hat a large yellow silk handkerchief, spotted with white, and shook it at us, as a flag-signal to be off.

"Now, what shall we do? Shall we obey orders, or is there anything you would like better? Perhaps you are afraid of the rocks, and the sea-weed, and the way the waves come running up the hollow places."

I said this, on purpose to stimulate her; perceiving the very fine spirit she had, which the colour in her cheeks was enough to prove. All I was afraid of was, that she might doubt the propriety of going round the point with me.

But she was too simple and good, to do that. She thought not of harm, any more than she had done it; and the only expression in her eyes was pleasure.

"Where have you put the nets?" she asked; "you shall have Roly's, and I will have my own."

Now, if there had been in my nature yet any lingering of the old tendency to rise into the air, through exultation, could anything have baulked it of its operation now? Within a mere mile of the spot, still shown as the scene of my early exploit, with the weather set fair, and the wind the right way, and with beauty at my side, a millionfold more enchanting than any first view of the sea—what was the reason that I did not fly?

Let Professor Brachipod explain that, if he can; and there is nothing that he will not explain most ably, whether he is able, or whether he is not. Some great change had "permeated my organisation"—as they call it, as if I were full of pipes—which made me cleave rather to the earth (in periods of exuberant happiness) than soar to the sky, to complete it there. Perhaps when I grow old, I shall become less earthy, and again seek my happiness by going upward; but nothing now sets me on the springs of my system, except the most expansive and elevating indignation.

And to put aside that, and all questions whatever of the motives for this, or the reasons against that, would manners (any more than common sense, and sound judgment) have allowed me to fly away from lovely Laura? So long as I had her at my side, what else in the earth, or the air, or the sky, could I desire?

No one has noticed—to the best of my knowledge—what a comfort there is, in the pattering of feet, when they keep time, and answer well to one another. Not as a single pair, I mean, each coming after the other with a gap; but as a pair of a pair-going feet, toe and heel exactly to one another, with no more space crosswise between them, than the other foot requires to come up, and fill the gap. And when this is done upon a firm gray sand, with just enough spring to make it beautiful to walk, and just enough yield to take a light impression, how can the most scientific human body, with a fair human body at the side of it, continue to lament that it is not quadruped?

When we came to the rocks, it was even better. For here, there was such a fine slippery spread of the carpet of the sea, and so many green fringes, covering traps where a little foot might sink, and perhaps get sprained, or at any rate get soaked, that at every few yards there was need of a hand, or sometimes of two, for discretion of step. And at every such aid, there was a smile to pay; not to mention the downcast of eyes sometimes, and sometimes their uplifting with a soft, sweet light, and the fluttering of lashes in the fresh wind from the sea, and the murmuring of lips, more pink and melodious than any clear Pacific shell. And when the brisk freedom of the salt air shed the dark clusters of her hair, upon her face and neck, veiling the gentle blush and the shy damask, my very best manners, and most deep responsibility, struggled in vain to prevent me from saying—"You are the very image of a beautiful moss-rose."

She was not at all offended, but looked calmly at me; and answered, to my horror—"What a beautiful idea! I shall tell Mamma, that you said that."

"Oh, please don't do anything of the sort," I exclaimed; "she would be sure,—or at least she might—I cannot exactly make you understand. But she might not be altogether pleased, you know."

"Well, I don't see why. She is very fond of poetry. But if she would not like it, you should not have said it. But don't be so distressed. I will promise not to tell her; because I am sure that you meant no harm. Oh, here is my first shrimping-pool!"

"I will sooner bite my tongue out," thought I to myself, as in humble confusion I unbound the nets—"than utter another syllable of admiration. What a fool I am! But who could help it?"

This put me on my very best behaviour, for a while; and even when she slipped upon an oozy slab, and nearly fell into a pool a foot deep, I did not hold her up, any more than I could help. And after that, being under orders not to use my net (which I began with, upside down) until I knew

something about it; but rather to watch how she managed, and to learn to do the like,—not an inch of advantage did I try to take, but with scrupulous honour held my net betwixt us, and smiled as if my face was as stiff as were my hands.

"I am afraid you don't enjoy this work;" she said.

"I am afraid of enjoying it too much;" said I.

And that made her laugh; for she had not the least idea of the darkness of my meaning.

"Now, you may fish upon your own account," she told me; "you see how you must draw the net along beneath the ledges, with the hinder part of the rim kept higher, to brush the rock so that they can't get back over it; and go well in under all the fringes of the weeds; and then up with the other rim, and fetch it out briskly. Now, you fish a little; while I look on, and applaud you, if honesty and facts permit. You shall have this large pool all to yourself, and it is the best among all the rocks. And you can manage Roly's net, which is half again the size of mine, you see. Now, I particularly want two dozen prawns, and they are not at all plentiful on this coast. I have only got seven yet, with all these shrimps. But everybody says that you are so lucky; and I shall believe it, if you catch one prawn; they are much quicker to get away than shrimps, and so it requires more skill to catch them. Well, I declare! You have got at least a dozen. I never saw so many in one haul before. Let me take them out, or they will be sure to jump away from you. Oh, what a very spiteful creature!"

A very large prawn, with no sense of the beautiful—at least as existing in the race that boils him—had rasped her most exquisite forefinger (which looked in the water as pellucid as himself) with the vile long crock-saw, which he carried on his head. And what made it the more meritorious on her part, she held fast to him still, and dropped him into the bag.

"How wonderfully brave you are!" I cried; "it is bleeding, two or three large drops. Put it into your mouth, and suck out the poison. Oh, how I should like to do it for you! Don't be so intrepid! You never can tell. He may have been living with a water-snake. I could tell you such stories, if it would stop bleeding. Let me tear up my handkerchief, and bind it."

"No, it is nothing at all; and if they were poisonous, how should we eat them? I split a piece of popweed, and put it on like a thimble, and that stops the bleeding immediately. It is not the first time they have given me a rasp. My dear mother likes me to wear gloves, whenever I go shrimping; but I always pull them off. I like to feel things, with my own hands. There, what a fuss about nothing! Now go on. How wonderfully fortune favours you! I have heard it so often, and now I can see it. Try that corner, there is always something there. Roly caught a fine silver mullet there, last summer; and I caught a little fish, we didn't knew the name of."

"Let me try to smile nicely," I said to myself; "I always get the best luck when I smile. Cause and effect are always hugging one another. To doubt one's luck, is to doubt it nearly always. I want to impress her with my good luck, for what impression is more favourable? Faint heart never won fairy prawns. That corner looks full of miraculous draught."

"Oh, please to let go—let go, Miss Twentifold! He may pull me in, but he mustn't pull in you."

For seeing me engaged with a mighty adversary, my lovely companion rushed forward, and put fair hands on the pole of the net, because my light figure was thrown off its balance, by an unexpected weight and force.

"Whatever it is, you shall have all the glory," she answered, as she obeyed me; "only I was afraid you were tumbling in."

"So I will, if it is needful. I don't mean to let him go," I exclaimed, as I set my heels firmly in a ledge. "Here he comes! What in the world have we caught?"

"A giant of a lobster, a perfect giant!" She was clapping her hands, with delight, as she said it. "Oh, I never beheld such a monster in my life! And there never was any one, with luck like yours. There, anybody else would have lost him but you."

"I don't mean to lose him, if he murders me," I shouted, as I swung him out mightily, and laid hold of him; "oh, he has laid hold of me, in the most inhuman manner! Whatever shall I do, to get out of his clutches?"

For this trenchant radical had nipped me by the wrist, with one mighty claws, and was clutching about with the other, to embrace me somewhere else.

"Oh, Tommy, take care of your nose," she cried, forgetting all formality in fright; "oh, what will your mother say, if you lose your nose? I know an old sailor, who has got the mark now. There, that claw is harmless at any rate. Now let us consider about the other."

She had cleverly pushed a large stone between his unoccupied nippers; but the villain lay stubbornly on his back, in a great tussock of weeds, spreading his long whiskers, and dappled joints, and lashing about the blue fans of his tail, and exerting all the leverage of his body, to drive his toothed fangs through my poor wrist; and if any one else had been there but Laura, I should have roared with the violence of pain.

"Oh, I am so sorry! Oh, how very dreadful! I would not have had it happen, for all the lobsters in the world." As she spoke she knelt by me, and her cheek touched mine, and a shower of her hair came streaming down, so that I could put my lips to it.

"Let him pinch away as hard as he pleases," I exclaimed, "he'll be tired before I am, of this position."

However, it was impossible not to feel, that the position would be better without its drawbacks. Even love's young dream may be sweeter, without nightmare; and painful is the bravest smile of pain. With a quick

thought, she ran for the handle of her net, and slipping it out of the socket, entered the taper end in at the heel of the claw, and with the aid of my other hand, unlocked my horny handcuff.

CHAPTER XXVI.
BENEATH THEM.

"Now let us go back, as fast as we can," she said, when she had wrapped up my wrist very softly, with her muslin handkerchief—which I took care never to restore to her; "the tide is coming in, and if it gets to the point before us, we shall have to go a mile inland. And I declare, we have forgotten all about the Professor's signal, which may have been waving for an hour! And perhaps my dear mother may be waiting for us. But this unequalled lobster will account for all delay. How quiet he is, since we tied his claws! I ought to beg your pardon for the liberty I took, in calling you 'Tommy;' but I was in a fright, and it sounds so very natural, because of the Professor; and Mamma is almost as bad as he is."

"I will only ask you one thing," was my answer; "try to be as bad, or as good, in that way. Call me 'Tommy,' every time you speak. Why, don't you remember when I put a new leg to your doll? And you gave me such a kiss, that I have thought of it ever since. And you said—'You are to call me *Lo*, remember. All the people I like best are to call me *Lo*. And I think I like you best of almost everybody in the world,' But of course you have forgotten all that now."

"What extraordinary creatures children are!" she exclaimed, as if she were the mother of the "Lo"; and then she came nearer to me, and said —"I remember that you were a great favourite of mine; and I don't like you not to call me anything. But look, there goes the great handkerchief!"

"You shall not get out of it like that;" I answered, with a little groan, as if my wrist was in great pain, for fear of any wrath on her part. "People should always understand each other; and how can they do that, without any names? You should call me 'Tommy,' upon all occasions; because I am Tommy, and nothing else; and even the Examiners call me 'Tommy,'

because of my steering the eight so much. But it never would do for me, to call you 'Laura,' except when we are quite by ourselves, you know; or with only the Professor, who never would tell, and I don't suppose he would ever notice it. In general society, I must call you 'Miss Twentifold.' But in particular cases, now and then, I should be very much obliged indeed, if I might,—just to keep up the practice, as one might express it, call you only 'Laura.'"

I would gladly have put something else before "Laura;" but I thought this was far enough to go just yet; and it would make it all the nicer, that her mother should not know it.

"Tommy," she replied, with as clear an intonation of my friendly, and genial, but not romantic name, as I ever yet was accosted with, "I shall leave it entirely to your own discretion, to call me what you like, and when you like. And I see no possibility of harm in my calling you, what all the Examiners at Oxford do. They gave you the most honourable class of all, I hear; because you never asked for it. The Bishop says, that you might have beaten Mr. Chumps."

This must have been an error on the Bishop's part, or hers; because there was no way to beat a double-first then; though now a man may go into perhaps five and twenty firsts. But I did not attempt to contradict her, after all her kindness.

"I hope, you have never seen Mr. Chumps;" I said, purposely making him as formal as I could; for I knew that if Bill Chumps came down here, for canvassing purposes, or anything else, he would be sure to get elected far in front of me.

"Oh yes, I have," she said, "a very tall gentleman, taller than Professor Megalow, or Roly; but not to be compared with them, in any other way. He has very red cheeks, and rather high cheek bones, according to my recollection."

"And a nose that sticks up a good deal," I replied. "Did you understand, when he came down, that his father carries on the business still? Not that it matters, as we all think now, from by any means a lofty point of view."

"It never came into my mind to ask,"—and herein her simplicity put me down—"anything at all about his father. Why should I? Roly brought him; as he brings anybody, who can be of use to him in politics. It is not my place, to have anything to say to them, except what is expected from the people of the house. And I believe he saved the life of my first cousin, Lord Counterpagne; and that alone would make him no stranger here. But look! If it were possible for the Professor to be in a hurry, he would be so now. We have been a long time, and I am afraid he will be angry. Let us put on steam—as Roly says."

I wanted no steam put on at present, but found no fair means of preventing it; and a few quick steps brought us up to the pebble-bank, under the cliff of the sacred relics.

"Aha!" the Professor cried, coming down to meet us, "no wonder I have waved my bandana in vain. What a magnificent specimen! And the beauty of him is, that he is good to eat; which, alas! was more than I could say for my specimen in there; when the lady superior of all the fish-women of Happystowe asked me just now, how I meant to cook my bones. She has marched away in sadness, at my dreadful waste of time. However, at last, all is perfectly ready; and I would have gone to work without you, except for the dread of your reproaches. We have made all the front quite safe, and the fissure at the back is not extending. The light is good still; but we have no time to lose."

"And my mother," asked Laura, "has she not come yet? She was to have been here, an hour ago. She will be so sorry, to see nothing of the work!"

"She has sent down a groom, with a kind little note, to say that she cannot come till five o'clock, and begging me on no account to wait for her. I would gladly have put it off until to-morrow, but any change of

weather might be fatal, or even a ground-swell with this springtide, of which there are some signs already. This rock, is not like the hard sandstone further north, or even firm chalk; but a brittle conglomerate. We are not our own masters; we must set to work at once. Tommy, I will not keep you long inside; and Miss Twentifold should stand behind this high-water mark."

He took off his hat, and laid it down upon the shingle; and then with a short tool of steel in one hand, (something like what the police call a "Jemmy," but forked at one end, and gouge-shaped at the other) and a square of soft felt in his left hand, he went into the cave, or rather excavation; and I (with my hat off) followed him. There was plenty of light, when the eyes got used to it; and I saw that the roof was established with short slabs of wood, supported by timber props.

"Why, there can be no danger whatever," I said, almost with some disappointment; "it is as safe as the dome of St. Paul's, I am sure. Of course, you know best, sir; but I should have gone straight at it. Can you spare me a tool to work with?"

"No," he replied, "you must use no tool; but only follow my directions. Why, what is the matter with your wrist—the right one?"

"Nothing, but a trifle of a pinch," I said; "I can use it as well as ever, I assure you."

"Very well; then watch me, but don't speak loud. There is no danger now, as you truly observe; or else I would have kept you outside, my Tommy. But you see that, to secure our object without fracture, I have yet to dig out a good bit of the shale—for it scarcely deserves to be called rock. And when that is done, there may be some little risk, because we cannot get any shores behind it. From what you have seen with me, you know at once, that the object before us is no *pelvis*, as Sir Roland insists upon calling it. All that part was easily secured; but I saw indications of continuance; and following them up, discovered these,—which are very grand joints of the *vertebræ*. The weight will be very considerable, and

we must try to preserve the articulations, which might be injured, if we got it out piece-meal. All you have to do is, to support the lower end, without jerking it, lest it should drop from the jarring; while I release the upper part. Then with a good heft, out we get it, with this felt under it, to prevent abrasion. Barnes keeps his eyes on the cliff outside, and will call us at once, if the crack grows larger. Ah! you fit exactly, as I said you would; with your foot in that nick, what can be better?"

Without a word, I watched his skilful work, as he followed with his tool every curve of nature's bold carving, now brought out into high relief; until he had the other part (bedded obliquely into the rock-wall) almost as free as mine was. Then he inserted one side of the felt, under the mighty back-bones of the monster, and saying—"Now both hands, my clever Tommy!" with the leverage of a bigger tool, which he caught up from the floor, gradually brought out the reluctant mass.

When the whole of it lay on the edge of the niche, (which he had lengthened, to allow for the jut) and was ready to come out, being all detached, he passed a piece of rope along it upon either side, taking advantage of the knuckles of the bones (such as I have often sucked, in ox-tail soup) and making fast at either end, to hold it altogether. Then he rubbed his nose, and looked at me, with a very sweet chuckle; and I feared that he would knock his bare head against the roof; for he had scarcely had a chance of standing upright, all the time, except just where there was a sort of pudding-basin in the shale stuff.

"Shall we call in Barnes?" he asked; "I am afraid his hands would shake. It looks like a Death's head, and cross-bones combined, in its present most tantalizing attitude. I thought I heard a crack. My young friend, listen. Run you outside, and reconnoitre; it is impossible for me, under any circumstances, to abandon these bones of rapture now. *Impavidum ferient ruinæ.* But I beg you to try a little *alibi.* Go out, and see how things look; and if all is serene, return, and help me."

"No, sir," I answered; "if there was a crack, no doubt it was Barnes cracking nuts outside. He fills his pockets with Brazilian nuts, fit only for a blacksmith. If you are ready, sir, so am I. Why, it is not half so big as I am."

"It weighs, Tommy, at least five times your weight. We will put up this plank, and slide it down. Here it comes gently! What, you here, Laura! You see, if I don't tell your Ma—as the children say to one another. Let it drop, Tommy, let it drop, if it hurts you."

For whether from sudden alarm about Laura, or the damage done to my own wrist, my end of the mass slipped away from me, and turned; and the three-inch plank, we were guiding it down, flew up, as if struck by a cannon-ball, and just missing my head knocked away the main bearers of the roof above us. I saw a great mass coming down upon Laura, and before I could think, I had her in my arms and under me; then a roar, and a flash of light, and black darkness came, and the last sense of spreading arms over her.

When I came to know what I was about again, lo there I was lying in a bed of sea-weed; with my head supported by a soft smooth arm coming under the curls at the back of my neck, and my breast laid bare to the wind of the sea, and a great deal of water gone into it. Moreover, I seemed to be dirty all over, as if I had been rolled along a knife-board; and a quantity of grime was in my mouth, so that I could hardly speak for grit.

"I don't seem to know where I am," I gasped.

"Never mind about that, till by and by;" a soft voice whispered into my ear; and soft lips felt nice, and warm, upon my cheek. "Are you better, oh, darling Tommy, are you better?"

"I should be, if I could blow my nose," I said; "there is nothing the matter with me, except that. But what is all this roaring noise, if you please? Is it coming down again? If it does, I am done for."

"No, dear! There is nothing coming down at all, except the waves of the sea. There is a heavy ground-swell. But none of it can come near you, dear Tommy."

"The Professor said there would be a ground-swell," I answered, with some nerve of memory touched. "There seems to be nothing, that he does not know."

"He seems not to have known everything, this time. Did he know that the rock would come down upon Laura, and must have killed her, but for you?"

"The rock come down? Oh, I remember now! Something came down. But it was all my fault. And perhaps I have killed her. Oh, please to let me die, if I have killed beautiful Laura!"

"Hush! You are not to excite yourself. You have not killed Laura; you have saved her life. She is not hurt at all, or at least very little; not a quarter so much as you are, my poor darling. Here, you are to take this, as soon as you can swallow."

She put some vessel to my lips; and I saw large dark eyes, and a trembling smile, and fair cheeks flowing with a flood of tears. Then I swallowed something warm, and said—"Oh, you must be Laura!"

"No, I am not. I am Laura's mother—your dear lady, as you used to call me. Now, rest a few minutes, and you will be better. You must not try to get up, by yourself; nor even with my help, till the Professor has examined you. He is up at the Inn, with darling Laura, who cannot be induced to go home, until she hears that you are well enough to come with us. I sent a boy for him, the moment you revived. Here he comes. He will soon tell us all about you. Don't be afraid; you are a hero, not a goose."

I felt more like a goose, and one going to be cooked, when my learned patron, after some kind words, began to make search for my injuries. By calling, he was a physician; and if he had only stuck to art, and discarded

science, made the most of his talents, and the least of his genius, and preferred the twinkles to the broad light of knowledge; doubtless he would have been making his twenty thousand a year, with a baronetcy, and the fame that breathes its last with its owner. And the laying of his fingers on my poor body would have cost fifty guineas, instead of nothing but some groans.

"The more he groans, the better I am pleased with him," he observed with the spirit of the true philosopher; "it proves that his sufferings are capable of expression, and that he has power to put them into form. The greater the damage to his outward husk,—for he could not expect to come off unhurt—the smaller the injury to the kernel of this Tommy. His bones are as sound as my Deino-Saurian's, which rolled on my feet, and most happily inflicted, without receiving injury. There, now, my dear friend, did you feel that?"

"I should rather think that I did," groaned I; "oh, it was dreadful! It was as bad as the way the four Professors poked at me. I hope you won't have to do that again, sir."

"No, I think not," he replied, in a tone which would have been blessed, if less dubious; "the fact of his perceiving my light touch there convinces me, Lady Twentifold—so far as we may trust observations, which we have not verified—that he has taken no internal harm, in the part that was most exposed to it. The brattice came down and protected his head—being clear of the fall myself, I could see the beginning of the accident at that end. The main weight fell upon his back just here—you told me that you wished to have everything stated, as plainly as I could state it, otherwise I would not give you these details—and when we dug him out, the main weight was there still. I rejoice to assure you, that he will be none the worse, after a week or two of good nursing. Any frame of stiff construction would probably have been broken; but our dear young friend, this heroic youth Tommy, has a frame of unusual elasticity, partaking rather of the pterotic character, and his internal organs are adapted to it. But I would not advise, that he should walk as yet, or

attempt any movement not absolutely needful. We will send for the cushions of your carriage, if you please, and lay them on these planks, and our Tommy on the top; and then with the strong arms of Barnes, and my own, we will take our young hero to the waggonette. You may thank him for the safety of your dear child. I was too far away, to be of any use. You will candidly acquit me of all blame, I am sure. Your daughter disobeyed me, in entering the place; and even after that, there would have been no disaster, except for the accident to our young friend's wrist. All the rest of the excavation is still firm, as you see."

"I will have every bit of it pulled down to-morrow, now that you have got all you want, Professor. And to blame you, would be almost as wicked, as to fail to thank the Almighty."

I know that she discharged that latter duty; but I doubt, if she ever acquitted herself so thoroughly, as to the former point.

CHAPTER XXVII.
PLEASANT, AND UNPLEASANT THINGS.

Everybody said, without one exception, unless it were that of some low-minded fellow, that I had performed a most gallant, valiant, and you might fairly term it, heroic deed. But I could not at all take this view of it myself; not only because of that modesty which sometimes suffers misunderstanding, from its terror of becoming conspicuous, but also because I had acted purely from instinct, and without two thoughts. If there had been two thoughts, the first would have been to save Laura—an act of mere selfishness; and the second would have been to save myself—an act of almost equal selfishness. However, casuistry is not in my line, and if people chose to think me a very fine fellow, I should have been guilty of self-assertion, if I had kept on contradicting them.

Nobody was allowed to contradict me, for at least a fortnight; and everything was done to anticipate my wishes. I lay on a beautiful couch, and read novels, for fear of any harm to my system; and although there was a great deal of "*débris*" in them, and most of the heroes had been pushed off cliffs, and some of them overwhelmed in caverns, I did not find one who had saved, at a stroke, his lady-love's bones, and his own, and a dragon's. And the best thing of all was, that Laura made a point of coming to see me, three times every day. Her mother was generally with her, it is true; but there are methods of exchanging glances, over kind shoulders, or behind beloved backs; and sometimes Lady Twentifold was called away, while her daughter must be left, just to say good-bye.

In another thing also, I was very lucky. My affection for my mother was intense and deep: but to be assured of her welfare was enough just now. By no means did I want her indefatigable love, and assiduous devotion, at this crisis. Lady Twentifold had written, in the-kindest manner, to suggest that she could come to assuage anxiety, and contribute her

tender care; but the letter had arrived at "Placid Bower"—as we had beautifully named our house—to distinguish it from the Boiling scenes—one hour after my dear mother's hasty departure for the port of Liverpool. By the earlier post, she had received a letter from the Manager of a "Sailor's Refuge" there, requesting her to set off by the next Express train, if she wished to see her dear brother William alive. This was that very same Uncle Bill of mine, who had tossed me through the ceiling, as above recorded; and partly in consequence of that exploit, had betaken himself to the briny waves again, and had long been supposed to be lying beneath them. That, however, he had forborne to do, contriving on the contrary to keep above them, during many adventurous years; until he was landed quite lately at Liverpool, in the last stage, as every one declared, of a long low African fever. He had not heard a word of our changes in life, but had given the address of the Soap-works, and the new Boiler had forwarded the letter.

My mother's kind heart was affected deeply; and she left home in such a hot flurry, with nothing but a few clothes and her cheque-book, that she never even thought of leaving any address, or orders concerning her letters. And we might have heard none of all this, for a month—for she was rather superstitious about sending bad news, and had not heard a word about my accident—except for the kindness of Miss Windsor, who happened to call at "Placid Bower," as she often did for a good luncheon. The cook gave her this, with much good-will, being troubled with the knife-boy (who had tried to kiss her, and did not care, how or when, he came home at night), as well as in distress, about her wages, and the emptiness of the beer-cask; and then Polly, like the mistress of the house, sat down, and examined the outsides of all the letters; not in any spirit of curiosity, in which, (as she confessed) she had always been too deficient, but to find whether she could be of any service. Knowing Lady Twentifold's letter at a glance, not so much by the post-mark, or the crest, as its "unstudied air of aristocracy," she went to my four-legged desk, and wrote a letter beginning—"Dear Tommy" (which some one far superior to herself considered a very great liberty indeed, and had a

great mind not to call me Tommy any more), and covering four sides, with a galloping scrawl, all about nothing, except that my mother had been suddenly called away to Liverpool, and no one knew when she would come back again.

I endeavoured to reconcile my mind to this, trusting that my excellent mother would take good care of herself, as she generally did, and feeling how very much better it was, that her mind should be free from anxiety, until I could announce my own recovery. And for this latter blessing I was not in any haste, finding all my medicaments wonderfully nice, and clinical treatment exceedingly fine.

"When are you coming downstairs, old chap?" Sir Roland inquired, in his brisk short style, when I had endured with all resignation a fortnight of these therapeutics. "The world won't stand still for the best of us, you know. The Professor has packed up his bones, and is going. He can't hope for any more big lizards; and of this one he has got every bit of scurf left, I believe. Wonderful, what fancies people have! If you offered him the Blue Ribbon, not a smile would appear on his philosophic countenance. But offer him a thread from the tail, or the *pelvis*, or the *pubes*, or whatever he calls it, of some hideous beast that died when mirrors were invented, and you'll get a smile worth walking ten miles to see. I tried to take a rise out of him the other day, with a big marrow-bone I mashed up, and stuck together inside out; and I rode twenty miles, to put the product into a petrifying well, for three days and nights. I made sure of having him; it looked so natural, and every bit of join was sawdered over with the drip-stuff.

"'New specimen from our cliff, sir,' I said. 'I hope it may induce you to prolong your stay.'

"And really for a moment, he looked puzzled, and I made sure of having fetched him. Then he stood up, and put his hand upon my shoulder; and you should have seen the laugh in his great eyes.

"'I hope, my young friend, you will retire from the House, when the question of our next grant is discussed,' he said; 'I shall put this in a case, as a great curiosity; and label it "*Specimen of a Conservative M.P.*" The inversion, and the petrification, are the leading features of the type.'

"What do you think of that now, Tommy?"

"Well, I think that it served you most splendidly right, and will teach you how to play tricks with great men. I should like to have seen you, with his strong hand on your shoulder."

"Come, if you can laugh like that, you heartless radical, there can't be much the matter with your inner parts, unless it is your heartless heart. And very little wrong with your outward either, to judge by the colour on your cheeks, when I came in. You were as bright, as 'a red red rose newly blown in June.'"

"Because your sweet sister had just been with me," thought I; but I only said, "Yes, I am a little better. My strength is coming back to me gradually, I believe. With your dear mother's wonderful kindness, and the help of a good constitution, I hope to be toddling about as usual, before very long. But Professor Megalow says, that I must shun most carefully every possible form of excitement."

"No doubt of that. But you appeared to me to be in a state of excitement, when I came in. And there was somebody going down the other stairs, I thought; a quick light foot it seemed to be."

"There are so many echoes in this house," I answered, throwing one weary arm across my face; "if you had only got to keep in one room, and listen to them, hour after hour, as I have got to do, you would find out that a very little thing excites one."

"Well, I beg your pardon, dear Tommy," he replied; "I should be the last to hurry you, I am sure; after all the great things that you have done for us. But I do want you to be about again, for a lot of reasons; if it were only to canvass Larkmount, before they forget your exploit, and before

that very dainty colour has time to get spoilt. All the Larkmount females will be in love with you; and everything is driven by the thimble there. The Rads are going to be fools enough, I hear, to bring forward an oily fellow, fifty years old, pitted with the small-pox, and with stubby black hair, against your soft carmine, and ambrosial curls. And another thing I forgot to tell you, Counterpagne will be here to-morrow, or the next day; and he is such an awful stick over the wine. He thinks himself wronged, with less than two hours of it; and what I shall do with him, when the Professor is gone, surpasses my imagination. He never says anything, except what he has read in the papers of the morning; and whatever they have said, he repeats word for word, for he has got a tremendous memory. And he does it all the same, if he has happened to get hold of a Radical journal, before the sound doctrine; whichever side he gets first, he swallows; and his stubbornness, pegs him fast to it; and whatever the other side says is therefore all rubbish, and rot, and roguery. His temper is none of the best; and that makes it so much harder to get on with him."

"But what can you do with him, all day long, if he is that sort of fellow?" I asked; "surely he must be even worse, before he has read anything at all; because he must want you, to settle his mind."

"Not at all; he would resent it deeply. He must have a thing in type, and take it in slowly, before his opinion—as he calls it—can be formed. And then, I am relieved of him for several hours, and am only too glad to be out of the way, while he marches all over the gardens, and shrubberies, and even the chase—as he calls the home-farm—for hours of spooning with poor Laura."

"What an atrocious thing to do!" I cried, feeling indignation almost lift me from the couch. "It is bad enough to spoil your evenings; but to ruin all her mornings is ten thousand times worse. How can you bring yourself to allow it?"

"I am thankful for the mercies that I thus ensue," he answered, with heartless, and most infinite levity; "what can be the value of a girl's time, Tommy? And she likes it, of course—for he makes fine speeches. Or if she doesn't like it, why she ought to do so, and the sooner she learns the way the better. She will have to put up with him, all day long, as soon as they are married, which it is high time now to settle. I may tell you, in confidence, that Counterpagne is just the fellow to be made a fool of; and so we must fix him, before that happens. Not that he is any great catch, you know. He will take quite as much as he brings; and his family is ever so much newer than ours is, for he only belongs to us in the female line. Still, this 'alliance' (as the cads of the papers call it) has been determined on, for very good reasons; and it plugs up a leak in some wicked old will."

"A very wicked will, I call it, a very wicked will, and a still more wicked deed—to bind two persons together for life, without asking whether they suit each other. If you were a beautiful, clever, sweet-tempered, warm-hearted, pure-minded, and lovely young lady, without a particle of selfishness, or two thoughts of a trumpery coronet—how would you like to marry Lord Counterpagne, taking him according to your own account? His temper is bad, to begin with—and to end with too, for any one who cares about his sister's welfare. Roly, bad temper is the curse of life. Those who are plagued with it, should live apart, or only with those they are afraid of; unless they have enough of self-knowledge, and enough strong will, to quench it utterly. Has the Earl of Counterpagne got those?"

"If he has, he has concealed them from me, thus far. He thinks his bad temper a very fine thing. But, my dear Tommy, what concern is this of yours?"

"None, I suppose; because she is not my sister. But I will say my say, and have done with it; and you may think me an upstart meddler, if you like. All of you have been so kind to me, and above all your dear mother, that I would rather die out of the way, than see a great misery falling upon

you. And the greatest misery in all the world is, for a gentle, sweet, loving, and sensitive creature, to be shackled for life to a man, conceited, stuck-up, narrow-minded, cold-hearted, selfish, and above all black-tempered. And if you bring such a thing to pass, you will rue it to the last day of your life, dear Roland."

"Come, come, he is not half so bad as all that?" Sir Roland replied, with more self-command, than I expected from him. "Counterpagne is a gentleman, in his way, and only requires humouring. Tommy, I thank you for your warning, which is uncommonly impressive, and disinterested"—here he fixed his piercing eyes on mine, but I was not thinking of myself at all, in the larger interests my own words had aroused; "but you have talked a great deal too much for your good. Go to sleep, and allow me to consider—what comes next."

He was going to say something harsher, as I saw. But his manly sense of my condition, and of the service I had been happy enough to render, withheld him from speaking out his mind, just then. And I was glad, when he was gone, and I could think things over.

CHAPTER XXVIII.
THE WELFARE OF THE FAMILY.

A great double blow fell upon me now, far worse than the fall of the rocks upon my back—for then I had the sweetest of comfort in my arms—to wit the departure of Professor Megalow, and the arrival of the Earl of Counterpagne. If the learned Professor had been labouring for the union of the two most interesting creatures yet extinct, with the prospect of neozoic forms, big enough to exhaust even his teratology, he could scarcely have exhibited higher powers of match-making, than he now had exerted for my benefit. He looked upon me as an acolyte of science—because of my manual services—and took any failure of mine as a defeat, henceforth, of that great power. Moreover, his heart was as soft as a child's, and as versatile, and as abundant; and the dry humour (which knowledge of the world had spread over the depth of feeling) was no more than the lid of the well of tears.

What a different nature filled, or tried to fill, his chair, at the plenteous table of the Towers, next day! Lord Counterpagne had a great many good points; he believed so himself; and who am I to contradict him? But he went a great deal further than that—he believed that he had no bad ones; and upon that matter, a very feeble arguer need not have feared to tackle him. He was soft, without being soft-hearted, stubborn without any real firmness, and slow-witted, without solidity. Far be it from me, to make the worst of him, because of his presumption about Laura; his own face was enough to give a clear account of him; and how can he object to that?

I was heartily glad, not for my own sake, but because it showed the good taste of sweet Laura, that she strove her very utmost—without transgressing the venial limits of truth—to keep liberally out of the way of this noble lord. My firm belief is, that she disliked him, with a loftier

disgust than I could cherish. For I did believe that he had some good points; and I made it my business to put these before her, with the noblest candour possible.

"Ah well!" she said, "I am surprised, that you should recommend him so. I thought you had more—more insight, I think the fashionable word seems now to be; as well as more, I will not say regard, but consideration for me."

It was as much as I could do,—when she spoke thus, and looked at me, as if her last friend was gone,—to forbear from a good burst of anger, and sorrow, and (the hardest of all things to keep under) great love. But I did not presume, for a moment, to hope that I should find the proper answer yet; supposing I were bold enough to show that last, in any plainer style than that of sighs, and looks, and forbearance to look, or to speak sometimes, and little unaccountable changes of colour, and very soft tones, and an evident contempt of all low considerations, and cold subjects. With all these, and a thousand more, I had been keeping my distance from others, and from her before them; yet striving imperceptibly to steal nearer, as a child sidles towards a shy bird, with salt.

"You ought to feel very much obliged to me," I answered, "considering how you are situated, for trying to make the best of everything."

At this her eyes flashed, as I meant them to do; and she put up her lips in a resolute way.

"I am not situated at all," she replied; "what a word to use about me! All the world seems to have made up their minds, that I have no will of my own whatever. And you, who might at least have been hoped to know me better, seem to be contented with the general mistake."

"Ah, I wish that we were young again," I couldn't help sighing, and taking her hand as I said it; "and could talk as we used to do, at the seaside. We never had any misunderstandings then."

"And we won't have any now," she answered kindly, with a dear little sigh (as my heart told my ears); "after all you have done for me, how could I endure it? Only, I don't understand why you should take such a violent fancy to Lord Counterpagne. We had better drop the subject altogether. It is scarcely one for us to talk about."

"If anybody knows, you ought to know that it is not a pleasant theme for me," I said, with a look at which she blushed, and turned away; "if I hate anybody on earth, it is his lordship!"

"Well!" she exclaimed, gazing at me with astonishment, but certainly no anger in her clear brown eyes; "I thought you had agreed to drop the subject. And after all your praises, to say such a thing as that! Why, you must dislike pure virtue! But I have been forgetting that I keep my cousin waiting. I ought to have met him, by the fountain long ago. And his dignity is hurt, if I am not there first. Now, you must keep quiet; and not walk about so much. Since the good Professor went, you never lie down at all. And he made you lie down, all day long! Good-bye now, till dinner-time."

"I am not going to stick in here," I cried, as she hurried lightly across the lawn, and my words seemed too late to overtake her, "while that muff of a lord has you, all to himself. The idea of his showing his nasty huffs to you! As soon as I am well, I'll have it out with him, as sure as my name's Tommy. Let me see him dare to pull his long face out at you; and if I don't double up his counterpane, if I don't make a Milord Blanket of him ——"

However, it was useless to go on like that, for she never looked back, to encourage me. My nature, moreover, is not pugnacious, until the very last straw is piled upon my back, or peace is more certain to bring thumps, than war. My lord had been a little supercilious to me, when I tried to save Roly from this lonesome plague; still, there had been nothing that I could show offence at, although I might take it inwardly; and when I spoke of Bill Chumps, as my earliest friend, he had shown some fine feeling, and real good-will. And now, when I tried to turn

things over, calmly and fairly in my mind, and put aside hopeless wishes, I found it very hard to make right with myself—as a gentleman is bound to do—my own line of behaviour. When I speak of myself as a gentleman, of course I do not pretend to be one "of the gentry"—as some people call those who are born of good position in the country, and so forth—but only to convey that, by education, association, and avoidance of low things, I now might claim to be measured by that high standard; though a long way from coming up to it.

And taking this view, I was forced to acknowledge, that I must not go on as I should like to do, and might be said—without any power of denial—to have already begun to do. I found myself treated with extraordinary kindness, by people of a far higher rank than myself, for a number of reasons, which need not be recounted, but had all worked up to this fine result; and by means of this confidence on their part, my behaviour was become of great importance to them. I do not refer now to national questions, matters of science, or politics, or even the use of my special faculties; but to the nearer and dearer home-interests, involving the welfare of the family. And being still very young, and of no experience, I puzzled my head, in trying vainly to discover, what was the right thing for me to do. My conscience seemed to tell me, that I ought to run away, and let everything take its course without me; and this I was very near doing, once or twice. But before I could pack up my trunk (which was a big one) my heart stood firmly in the way; and whether it persuaded my mind, or not, is more than I can tell; but certainly my mind, with a good show of reason, supported it. Why should the loveliest, and sweetest, and best, of all maidens in the world be sacrificed, for an object so low—from a high point of view—as a bag of dirty money, or a strip of land, still dirtier? Much happier would it have been for her—with her warm loving nature, and sensitive heart—once for all, to have been crushed in the cave, than slowly, and coldly, and consciously, to be overwhelmed, and thus buried alive, by the burden of the one, who should truly be her light, and life, and liberty. To prevent that, most clearly was my first duty.

And while I was proving to my conscience this—which pure inexperience alone could excuse it, for not having understood long ago—it came to my knowledge, that Lord Counterpagne was not, (in other ways than those already mentioned as unsuitable) fit to be trusted with the sacred love, and pure heart of any good maiden. Into this I shall not enter, any more than I can help; for the discussion of such matters (which even ladies sometimes taunt us with avoiding) can cure nobody, and may taint many. Enough that it quenched all further doubt (which became at once unmanly squeamishness) as to my duty, towards him and her; and would have made me loathe the sight of him near Laura, even if she had been nothing to me.

"Tommy, you are not in your usual spirits," Sir Roland said to me, as he sat in the chair of hospitality, after the ladies had retired, with the Earl on his right hand, and me on his left; "I fear that you are walking too much, my dear boy, before you have got your strength up again. If you do that, the Radical candidate for Larkmount will get all the fellows pledged to him, before I can even show you."

"He is thinking too much about his election;" Lord Counterpagne remarked, with that long slow chuckle, which proved his enjoyment of his own poor wit; "and from what I have seen in the papers to-day, he will have a lot of questions to answer."

"About the cession of Gibraltar, and the total abandonment of India," Sir Roland answered, with a wink at me. "I saw that you were deep in that subject, my cousin; and I hope that you found it suit your taste."

"Justice is justice," the Earl replied; "and narrow considerations should not be allowed to blind us, as against the larger view. For instance, how should we like the Spaniards to be in permanent occupation of Dover castle, and the mouth of the Thames? And, to a Spanish mind, Gibraltar combines the advantages of both those positions. I confess that I reflected seriously over the forcible manner in which that was put. And supposing that I had been by birth a Spaniard, which is very easily conceivable——"

"Not at all. You are not a bit like a Spaniard, and you had better not reflect as one, until you are re-conceived. We have got those places, and we mean to keep them; as the Spaniards would keep Dover castle, if their ancestors had taken it, and they could stick to it. The electors of Larkmount are Englishmen; and they would never have Tommy, if he talked such stuff. To-morrow, you'll get hold of a Tory paper first, and read all about our glorious heritage, and the paramount duty of keeping it intact. Here, my dear fellow, take another glass of port. You require it for your constitution."

His lordship looked angry, but did as he was bidden, for he was heartily afraid of his strong-minded cousin; and to turn the conversation, I broke in, saying to Sir Roland,

"To-morrow, if it suits you, I shall be most happy, to go over, and see those highly interesting people. Your Twentibury business comes on next Friday, and you go up to take your seat next Monday. But if I am to have the honour of being returned, it cannot be for some three months yet. And when you go to London, I think of going too. I am rather uneasy about my mother. I have not heard from her, for a long time; and I don't even know, where she is at present."

"Very well; you shall come up with me, and be back again to practise at the rabbits, for the first. Counter, I mean to educate this Tommy and I'll back him to wipe your eye, when the long-tails come in."

"He will have to beat his tutor, before he can do that," Lord Counterpagne answered, with his drawling smile, which never followed any but his own ideas.

And then they began to talk about sporting matters; such as I had heard of continually, at Oxford, but knew very little of, in any other way.

It grieved me very deeply, as I watched this man (who scarcely ever deigned to consider me at all), to think that I must leave him here with Laura, for I knew not how long, to go sauntering about, and sitting upon benches out of doors, and poking into flowers, or gold and silver fish,

and droning all his paragraphs from the papers into her poor weary ears. Sometimes she would rouse her bright spirit, as I knew, and give him such an answer, as of right should do him good; but the worst of him was, that his wits were not quick enough to enter into anything that went against himself. And Laura, on the whole, was so gentle, and long-suffering, and desirous to keep any visitor happy, and herself of so lively a disposition, that she seemed too likely to try to make the best of him,—far more than he deserved, and nearly as much as he required. All this made it more, and more, miserable for me, as the Monday for my farewell drew nigh, and there came no letter from my mother, to relieve me of that sad necessity.

CHAPTER XXIX.
BECAUSE HE HAD NO PITY.

Sunday was a very lovely day, and people came from nearly two miles off, to church. The church was just outside the eastern lodge, at the end of the finest avenue; and it was very little larger than that lodge, and scarcely looked so serious. But the parson was a very worthy man to preach, and he often said things that could be talked about. So that any people, who were staying in the neighbourhood, for the sake of the air, or the views, or the moderate price of meat and butter, or even the salt water, were glad (if the Sunday was fine, and a fly could be found, at a reasonable figure) to be able to say, before they left the neighbourhood, that they had heard the famous preacher, Mr. Arkles, one of the few who can still be heard *gratis*.

Naturally enough, the pews belonging to the Towers, and its race, were three quarters of the church. But if any respectable people came in, and looked about, as if they were used to cushions, and objected to the free seats, which had none (and in fact had no room for them, being about as wide, and rough, as a kidney-bean stick) there never was any hesitation, on the part of the Officials of the Towers, from the housekeeper downwards (according to the dresses of the persons that came in, and their power of conveying their importance by their looks), to push open any door, with some yards of room inside it, and nod solemnly, yet Christianly, over the top rim of their Prayer-books. In the chief pew of state, there was seldom anybody, to be found at Morning Service, except a few visitors at the Towers; not from any turn on the part of Lady Twentifold against Mr. Arkles—though the public very generally put it down to that—but simply because she had so many parishes, in all of which she liked the clergymen; and she felt it a duty, in the proper round of Sundays, to make calls upon all of them, in right order, and in church. But, of a Sunday evening, when the dinner-time allowed, and the trees of

the avenue dropped no drop, all the "cover-parties," (as the old butler called us, for whom he had to lay the table) used to march to the little old church—for my lady would have no carriage out on a Sunday evening—and behave ourselves, according to our nature, there.

Upon this Sunday, which was to be my last with Laura, for I could not tell how long, Sir Roland had driven his mother away, in the light mail-phaeton to some far-off church, but the young lady stayed at home, to attend to the visitors, and take them to the parish church. Lord Counterpagne had a great mind not to go; and it would have been better for him, as it happened, if he had persisted in this irreligious tone; but even his stupidity was beginning to perceive, what a dreadful condition I was in, concerning Laura; and that she would not have me disdainfully spoken of, when I was away, and could not defend myself. And these considerations made him go to church.

Everything went on, as well as need be, until we had got some distance into the First Lesson. I had seen a big weather-beaten man come in, at the beginning of the *Venite*, forgetting himself, for the moment, so that he kept his broad hat on his head, until he was reminded where he was. This made me look at him with more attention, and wonder what had brought him hither; for he seemed to be not of the neighbourhood. He refused to come up to the grade of the pews; though the footmen of the Towers cast glances at him, as if he were worthy to come in with them—which they never did to any below a tradesman, or a farmer—and when he took his hat off, he put it on a stick, and sat down upon the free bench, and propped himself up. Then he stood up, at leisure, with his staff in his hand, and began to survey the congregation. The clergyman looked at him, as much as to say—"You are not behaving very well, my friend;" but he never returned his gaze, nor seemed to know that there was any clergyman. His manifest desire was, to see everybody that happened to be inside those four walls; and a kindred curiosity arose, on my part, to know all about him. I saw that he was stout, and at least of middle age, with a ruddy face, and grizzled whiskers, and that candid expression of a puzzled state of mind, which generally shows an honest

nature. It was clear, that he had not found what he sought, though his eyes were especially turned to our high pew. He looked at Miss Twentifold, and he looked at me; and I could scarcely help smiling at his disappointment, as I watched his lips, and could almost hear him say to himself—"No that is not the man."

Meanwhile, the Earl of Counterpagne was lounging at the back of our deep pew; for he was very lazy, and had taken a great deal to drink last night, as I knew by his behaviour at the billiard-table; and being out of sight of Mr. Arkles, and his flock, he was stopping his ears with his dainty fingers, to shut out the "horrible row," as he called it, of their hearty, but untutored chanting. And throughout the reading of the Psalms, there he stayed, putting up his feet; which I could see, vexed Laura.

The First Lesson happened to be the twelfth chapter of the Second Book of Samuel, and Mr. Arkles began to read it beautifully; for he had a fine voice, and loved brave English. But before he had gone very far, my lord, being weary of his lounge, stood up to take a stretch, and have a look at the inferior people; among whom there were some bright comely girls, not unwilling to catch a great nobleman's glance. The clergyman read in a loud clear voice, as if himself were the prophet—

"The man, that hath done this, shall surely die. And he shall restore the lamb fourfold; because he did this thing; and because he had no pity. And Nathan said to David——"

"Thou art the man."

A far louder voice than Mr. Arkles' shouted these words, like thunder; and the big man pointed his staff, at the pale face of Lord Counterpagne.

"Yon stands the man, that made a harlot of my daughter."

"Churchwardens, I call upon you to remove that person;" the clergyman said, as soon as he recovered, from the breathless astonishment that filled the church.

Two elderly men arose, to do his bidding; but before they could get near him, the big man clapped his broad hat on his head, and walked out slowly through the open door, by which he had been standing.

Then my lord turned round to us, with a very ghastly smile, and said aloud, "It is only some poor madman; but he ought to be taken into custody."

Laura, who had become as pale as death, shrank from him to my side; and I took her hands, in fear that she might faint; but she did not do that, though her hands trembled coldly in mine, and a large tear rolled down either fluttering cheek.

To the rest of the service we paid small heed, though going through the forms of it; and it was all in vain, that our companion tried to catch our glances, and to smile it off.

We three were the last to leave the church; and Mr. Arkles very kindly followed us from the vestry, (into which he had called the churchwardens) and told us at the churchyard gate, how sorry he was for the disgraceful scene, and the alarm of the young lady. Then he shook hands with her, and lifted his hat very stiffly to Lord Counterpagne, and left us at the eastern lodge.

As we entered the avenue, leading to the Towers, which was more than half a mile in length, the Earl began to walk, at a pace very different from his wonted dawdle, and seemed to be casting his eyes, in a nervous manner, between the great trunks of the trees. The servants of the house were far in front, sometimes in sight, and sometimes hidden by the dips of the land, and the turns of the road, whose beauty he did not appreciate. This, however, I was capable of doing; and I did not see why we should be in a hurry, because his lordship was perhaps in a fright. So I said, to break the solemn silence (which seemed to have fallen upon us somehow, after a little weak talk about the weather),

"Why should we go at such a headlong rate? The day is very warm; and why should we endeavour to beat it, at its own business?"

Laura, who was walking between us, gave me a sweet little glance, almost the first she had ventured to exchange with me, since that occurrence in the church; but Lord Counterpagne said—

"Oh, very well. I forgot that you had not recovered your activity, Upmore; after all that business, when you were the pillars of Hercules, or somebody? Who was it—Atlas? You are fresh from Oxford. A remarkable instance of the unexpected. Your principal gift is of flight, I believe; though you have never favoured me with a specimen."

His manner was spiteful, to the last degree; possibly because I had not sided with him, throughout what I considered the confusion of a blackguard.

"Your lordship may envy me that gift," I said, with more irritation than I ought to have shown, in the presence of gentle Laura; "but I have never yet used it, to escape those I have injured."

Before I could answer his furious stare, a man of great substance appeared, from behind a big tree, and stood before us. In one hand he had the staff, which had given so much point to his Scriptural denunciation; and he held the other open, with great fingers bent, and a rapid growth of tendency, towards the collar of the Earl.

"Mind what you're about," I said, going up to him, with every expectation of being tossed into the hole of the tree, that had concealed him; and I pointed to Laura; and he said—

"Roight, lad; teak t' yoong leddy a waa, if tho wool. A foo pri'ate words, is aw' oi ston here fur."

"Shall I come back, to help you?" I called out to Lord Counterpagne, as I hurried off with Laura, to get her out of sight of it; and although he was in a very low ebb of heart (as his face, and legs showed), he had the courage to say—

"No. This is a private affair—an attempt to sponge on me. Fellow, take your hands off."

"To sponnge on e, eh?" I heard the loud voice roar; "ool't lack a mony sponnges, afore oi've a dooed wi' e."

And desirous as I was to know, how this was to happen, I durst not look round; because of darling Laura, who was terrified so that I had no resource, but to help her along, with both comfort and support.

"Oh, what does that mean?" she asked, with the saddest forebodings in her tearful eyes; and I answered,

"It must be the way, the grasshoppers are always going on, in this hot weather. It is the way they make love, you know, to one another."

"It sounds much heavier than a grasshopper," she whispered, as a yet louder stroke awoke the echoes; "and if that's the way they make love,—I am sure, it is not at all what I should like."

"Oh that I knew what way of doing it you do like!" I murmured even in that crisis, and she seemed not to hear me, except with her cheeks.

It struck me, that she should have been more anxious, for me to hurry back to the succour of the Earl. But, (either from not knowing what was toward, or from a readiness to keep me out of danger, or even perhaps some resignation to the code of justice) she took me quite up to the steps of the terrace, before she could at all dispense with me. And though I ran back at full speed, with three or four men after me, to the spot where I had left Lord Counterpagne; there was no evil-doer there, for us to apprehend, unless it was my lord himself. And we found him in such a very sad condition, that we were all afraid to lift him up.

CHAPTER XXX.
PERFIDY.

Anything of that kind makes me sad; because I am in such a struggle to believe, what everybody now has settled long ago—and the younger he is, the more he feels it—that all our forefathers, in comparison with us, were low savages, fools, and brute beasts of the earth. And doubtless, to this perception of the nature, from which we ourselves descend—or rather, by some gift (more marvellous a thousandfold than mine) ascend, tower above their wretched loins, and soar into the seventy-seventh heaven, or at least as much as we have left of it undemolished—to this pure disdain of the brutes who begot us, are due our strong yearning towards, and reverend faith in, the great father of us all,—a little snail, without a head.

But so long as my nature is so disloyal to that great All-father, as to want a hat; thoughts will come into that superfluous, and therefore universally weak, part of the present human being, which goes into the chimney-pot —evolved, alas! as a penalty for that disloyalty. Oh, that Father Mollusk could only have foreseen a tithe of the woes, which the evolution of a head would entail upon his headstrong descendants! Unwise was he in his generation; and some Satan must already have been *in posse*, or why did Mother Mollusk—— But such questions are not Science; which allows no question of her bashful physiology.

Happier would have been my position now, if the survival of the fittest had omitted me, or at least had restored me to the patriarchal state of headless existence, at the bottom of the sea. All birds are now proved to have been evolved from lizards; which accounts for my complicity with the Saurian race, and their influence upon my destiny. And another piercing genius has certified us, that the canine race, being threatened with extinction, after milliards of years, by hydrophobia,[2] lay down,

and eccn[=e]sted the protoplastic flea; who took to his labour of love, with congenital tripudiation, and rescued the author of his origin from impending annihilation *thus*.

Hydrophobia was the product of *ennui*, of lying chained up in the sun, and meditating too profoundly, as all dogs do. Thus, a dread of the depths of reflection was instituted in the mind of Towser, which developed, in the intellect of his descendants, into hydrophobia; and must have undone them to the ends of their tails, without the evolution of the genial flea. He, with an infusion of fresh blood, sprang forth, developed, his saltatory powers, by development of long legs—or *vice versâ*, for I am not sure which way that link goes,—and has ever since satisfied the exigency that developed him, by preserving every son of a dog thence generated, from the paraphrenitis of nothing to scratch.

"*Acrior illum*
Cura donat."

I thought of all this, (though without any room for the moral lesson it so well conveys) as I came upon old *Grip*, spread out largely in the sun, upon the pet flower-bed, upon the pet lawn, of that elegant *Rus in urbe*, as the house-agent called it—"Placid Bower." *Grip* had caught a lizard, which he did not care to eat, getting more in the trencher way, than he could away with, and finding his teeth more and more like a hay-rake, which has done its work upon a score of farms, by August. But it was against all the principles of his life, and the time-honoured policy of the nation he belonged to, to let go a hold he once had laid. And yet, as I could see by the twitching of his shoulder, and munch of his lip, he could scarcely tell how to defer the crisis, and climax, of a thoroughly exhaustive scratch. For no one durst wash him, except myself; and I had never been near him, for six hot weeks.

Poor old chap! It made all my low spirits go lower, to think that he could never more hear me, or see me, until I came as nigh him, as the length he once could jump. There was no need to chain him up any more, for

fear of his flying at some visitor. He had lived in the world such a length of time now, that he cared not to strive any more against vice; unless it came meddling with his own dear belongings. All that old interest, of sticking up for honesty, he had long since resigned to his Oxford son, *Grapple*; whom he now approached with great consideration, through the loss of his teeth, and the stiffness of his loins. *Grapple* was bodily as good as *Grip* had been, in his fighting hey-day, neither was his pluck inferior; but the difference between them, in warmth of heart, and faith, and steadfast loyalty, was almost as great as that grown up, between our grandfathers and ourselves.

But I did not expect, well aware as I was of his staunch, and well-proven fidelity, such warmth, and I might say such wildness of welcome, as the ancient dog afforded me. When I called out "*Grip*," he pricked up his ears, as if he could never more believe them; and then he turned his poor eyes, spread with film; and looked at me, as if I were a memory. Beginning to get an idea of some bliss, he slowly arose, and shook himself; but still with his dull eyes set on me, and a tremulous inquiry of his worn-out tail.

"*Grip*," I said, "*Grip*, what an old stupe you are!" and the sudden joy made a young dog of him. With a mighty bark, such as he never expected to compass again, he leaped up at me, and put his great ossified paws on my breast, and offered me the delicate refreshment of his tongue. Then he capered about, and made such a proclamation, that the servants rushed out; and seeing me rushed back, to get things a little tidy, before they let me in.

I found that my mother was still from home, but expected to come back that night, and had written, to have the best bedroom prepared, for an invalid gentleman whom she would bring. This would, of course, be her brother William, of whom I had fully thought to hear as dead, and was greatly pleased to find it otherwise, having kind memories of him, and being uncommonly short of relatives.

As there was still a good piece of daylight, and it seemed dull to sit there by myself, I resolved to reward the faithful *Grip*, by taking him to see his native land, as he fairly might consider Maiden Lane. So we set forth together to call on Mr. Chumps, who still carried on his nutritious business, and wore the blue apron more stoutly than ever.

"Ha, my lad!" he cried, as I opened the shop-door, which rang a sharp tocsin against beef and mutton-reivers, "you are come just in time for a glass of the fizzing. Have you heard the good news? No, I s'pose not; you've been down among all them swells, so long. Wonder almost, you would deign to look us up. Go on into the parlour, with the missus, and our Linda. In ten minutes thirty seconds, I shall put the shutters up, and wouldn't take 'em down for the Dook, or his Royal Highness. Leastways, I might for H.R.H., if he were going to give a supper-party; but not for his Grace,—won't have shanks with his legs. Bill will be back in ten minutes; go in, lad."

In the parlour I found Mrs. Chumps, and her daughter Belinda, and some one else sitting in the corner, who seemed to be doubtful about turning round, at the sound of my voice, or whatever it might be. The room was rather gloomy, from a balcony over the windows, and the evening now set in; and I thought, what a very shy young lady they have got! Or perhaps, she has had too much tea and cake, and is gone fast asleep in the corner. Not to disturb her, I sat down far away.

"Poor dear!" said Mrs. Chumps, who was looking very well, and you might say ten years younger, with a new front to her hair, and a pink binding to her bosom, and a pair of long-skirted kid-gloves on her lap, and a juvenile jacket with Bohemian scollops, hung behind her, as if she had just pulled it off—which she never could have done, unless born in it. "Poor dear, she naturally feels it so deeply. Oh, Tommy Upmore, you men never feel!"

"Don't we?" I replied, while wondering who the poor dear was, and what her feelings were. "Mrs. Chumps, if you had only seen the stroke of our eight, that beat Cambridge three years running, when he was compelled

to have his wise tooth out, and he had only cut it two years, I can assure you, and the dentist attributed its state entirely to the way the wind came over his left shoulder, and he begged me to support him with my moral presence, that was how he put it, from his demoralisation——"

"How exactly you do talk like your dear mother!" Mrs. Chumps answered, and rather shut me up; for a Bachelor of Arts ought to do more than that. "I dare say the young man felt that deep enough; and my very best sympathies would be with him, having had out, from first to last, five and forty of 'em."

"Ma!" cried Miss Belinda, "Now how can you be so wicked? Mr. Upmore knows better, when he sees them all there. And as for five and forty, and at fifty shillings each—oh, Mr. Upmore, how many have we got?"

"That depends upon circumstances," I replied, for fear of being wrong, having never been told at Oxford, nor yet by Mr. Cope, nor yet by Dr. Rumbelow, nor any of the Classics I had dealt with yet. "Some have got more, and some have less, no doubt."

"Never mind that;" Mrs. Chumps resumed,—"such subjects are meant for young people, or those who have never known what ill health means. But, my dear Tommy, the exact sum is twelve thousand, one hundred, and twenty-five pounds, deducting the duty of three per cent.; and hard it is to have to break the even money. But the poor dear does her best to feel resigned; and the other will have to pay six per cent.; that's one comfort, at any rate. And lucky she may count herself to get it at that reckoning, when the whole twenty-five should have come this way. But there, we must be easier to please, as I'm sure has always been my motto. It will fetch me back to the Church, it will; just when I was going to join the Congregation. They provides in the Church such a tenderness of feeling, as I first learned out of the Catechism. N. or M. it says, and he was both, for his name was 'Nathaniel Matthew,' and he sat at the receipt of Customs. And my Godfather, and Godmother, in my Baptism, wherein I was made an Inheritor. There is no such fine feeling among them Dissenters. Poor dear, it is a sad blow for her! There was tears in

her eyes when she told us of it, and no Mammon of unrighteousness could stop them rolling. My son William, who was first of all the Colleges, is gone to the lawyer now, to give the proper orders, as a Barrister of Lincoln Inn is bound to do. She have just dropped in to talk about the mourning; her dear mamma says black; but her mind is too distressful, and not at all suitable to her bright complexion. Lavender, to my mind, is as deep as need be; and the poor dear never seen him till his funeral, that took place at Highgate yesterday. Give us your opinion, Mr. Upmore, if you please; after coming from all their Ladyships."

"But I don't understand, Mrs. Chumps," I answered, wondering at my own stupidity. "I have not the least idea, what the circumstances are."

"No more don't I, altogether. The whole have come such a sudden blow to us. Belinda, darling, run and fetch the papers. Oh, bless the girl, she's gone without the keys, I do believe!"

Mrs. Chumps laid down her gloves, and began hunting in her pockets; then hurried from the room upon her daughter's track, while I sat bewildered. Then a sad sigh issued from the gloomy corner, and a melancholy whisper followed it.

"Oh, Tommy, Tommy, will you ever forgive me? For years, you were the chosen of my heart. But—but you slighted me, you know you did; ever since you became so rich, and grand. Whatever has happened is all your own fault—and—and he is so many sizes bigger."

"Polly Windsor!" I exclaimed, going up to look at her. "Have you been there, all that time, and never spoke a word to me?"

"Oh, how could I do it in the presence of spectators? And I was so afraid, that you would make a dreadful scene, when you heard of all this money, and my perfidy. Oh no, you must never call it that, dear Tommy. You would break my poor heart. When I think of the many times, we have settled almost everything, sitting in the cleanest of the cinder-holes—my dress, and yours, and what the breakfast was to be, and where we would have our holidays—and now, oh now, you can be nothing more to me

than the best man, if they even allow you to be that. But I shall insist upon it, and Bill, in return, may settle all about the bridesmaids. Oh, here they come again! For my sake, control your feelings."

I found no difficulty at all in doing this, and was heartily glad when I got at last to the kernel of the story, which was simply this. Mrs. Windsor, who had always spoken very highly of her grand connexions, had an uncle well posted in the Custom-House, and for many years enjoying fine opportunities—such as they seldom seem to get there now—of making due provision, for the benefit of himself. This thoroughly honest old gentleman contrived, by strict economy, and frugal speculations, to die of the value of more than half a plum; and having neither chick nor stick to care for, had left the sum of five and twenty thousand pounds, to be divided equally between his two God-daughters, Polly Windsor, and another yet more distantly related, whose name I have forgotten, but can find out if required. It must not be supposed for a moment, that these facts had any influence whatever on the heart of our Bill Chumps, which had found its purer half, and more exalted aim, in Polly, ever since he passed his little-go. Still, there were so many of the Windsor family, and soap had been so dull of late, and candles had looked down so much, that the paternal purveyor of meat, (more stubborn of fibre than a Clare-market steak), steeled his heart, and his block-knife, against an alliance, which would cost a fellowship of three hundred pounds a year.

Now this Custom-house money had redressed all that. Bill, who was sure to have his way in the end, as he always had done hitherto, was welcome to have it at once, with the blessing of the slaying and the boiling interest. I alone was to be left in the cold; and sympathy was felt for me, whenever I was present. But no sooner was I gone, than I found out once, by coming back sharply for my walking-stick, that everybody laughed, and made a good joke of it; as if I had been served quite right, and taught not to give myself airs—which I am sure I never did! And this imbued me with such a sense of wrong, that I declined to be the bride's best man at the wedding, any more than I would be Bill's bridesmaid; and instead of feeling any envy for him, I was sorry; being morally

certain that he would pay out for it. For Polly Windsor's mother had a temper of her own; as my dear father (a very sound judge of women) had said in my presence, at least fifty times, when she had taken up her glass with her gloves on, a thing no right-minded woman ever thinks of doing. And such things can seldom, or I might say never, be thrown off in the female line.

However, it was no concern of mine, what sort of a handful Bill Chumps had got; and the public will perceive, that I should not have gone into this question at all, as I have been obliged to do, except for the stories put about, concerning my share in the matter—which, as you see, was none! But no sooner does a man become highly distinguished in politics —as I have been compelled to do—than everything he has handled (from the time he used his coral) is raked up, and ransacked, and rifled against him. Fifty times, have I been charged at elections, and five times in the House itself, by Irish members, with having jilted the daughter of a brother, and far superior, soap-maker to my father! It is below my dignity, to explain such matters, at the crisis of a very important debate, or even when they are throwing eggs at me. But I do hope, that now having set down the facts, with every word ready to be sworn to, I have heard the last of that vile calumny.

FOOTNOTE:

[2] Alas that the newest, and perhaps noblest, of all scientific discoveries —the doctrine of creation by eccn[=e]sis—cannot be claimed by an English, or even—as *a priori* should have been—a learned Scotch professor, but passes to the credit of a French *savant*, hitherto unknown, but now immortal.

CHAPTER XXXI.
FREE TRADE.

When one has been wronged by the outer world, the sooner he gets back to the bosom of his family, the likelier will he be to bear it well; and as soon as the Champagne was finished, I made off. It was useless to be in any hurry with old *Grip*, for he knew how undignified it is to pant, though the formal cause thereof be portliness; so that by the time we both got back to "Placid Bower," my mother had been at home more than an hour, and had packed Uncle William off to bed.

"Oh, darling Tommy, so weak he is," she told me, as soon as we had heard all about one another, and finished dinner; "I have only got to hold up my finger, and he does it. And I know the day when it was—'Get away, Sophy;' or 'Do you think I'd put up with such—something—rubbish?' or 'Pack up my traps, if you want to try that game.' And he seems to have something on his mind, that he cannot quite bring himself to tell me, in the few times when he is at all fit to do it. You must understand, that he goes up and down pretty regular, according to the time of day, whenever the weather keeps side with it. Let him have his breakfast, and get up at his leisure, and have the barber in to shave him and the doctor to tell him that his pulse is better, and then let him sit, and see the sun come in, even through a shrubbery of chimney-pots, and tell him that he shall have one pipe, supposing he manages to eat his dinner well, and you should see how happy, and how smiling, he lies back. But, as soon as the dusk comes on, and the daylight goes, and we can find no star to show him, but only dull lamps in the narrowness of the streets, then he seems to lose all hope altogether, and turn over on his back, and put his hands together. And he says, 'Let me die, Sophy; I should like to die, if I thought there was any hope of going up to heaven.' And I say to him, 'William, don't think of such dreadful things; you are not an old man yet, you know.' And then he looks at me, more pitiful

than you could endure, if you had known what a lively boy he was; and he doesn't say another word, as if it was all useless, but sighs till you can see his great ribs shake. Oh, Tommy, he brings me down so low sometimes, that I feel only fit to see a clergyman."

"Mother, you don't look at all like yourself," I answered, for she had always been so pleasant; "you never must give way to such melancholy thoughts. Uncle Bill will soon be better, in this fine air here; and we'll show him the sun through the trees, every morning, and the cock that flies up into the weeping-ash to crow, and the lambs on the hill, that have just been shorn, and play like a lot of white mice in the distance. And then in the evening, if he feels down-hearted, we'll shut out the darkness before it comes on, and light up the gas, and a dozen best candles, and play a game of cards to amuse him, or tell stories. I can tell stories now, like fun, of all the larks we had at Oxford; and sailors are like children, so easy to amuse."

"Well, my dear," said mother, "we will do the best we can; and your cheerful countenance is enough to scare the blues. But he is not long for this world, I am sure of that—poor William! But I do feel so thankful, that he will die among his friends."

"Nonsense!" I replied, for I had not seen him yet, as he had fallen into light sleep after painful journey, "you have caught the infection of his lowness, mother. 'However bad the case is, never pull long faces,' as you used to sing to me, when I got caned."

But when I went to look at Uncle Bill, that night, as he lay fast asleep upon his little narrow bed—for nothing would induce him to go into a four-poster—I felt very much afraid that dear mother was too right. I never should have guessed, that this could be my Uncle Bill, of whom I had such playful memories, and to whose buoyant spirits, and frolicsome nature, nothing had ever been known to come amiss. The great frame was there, and the big tarry hands, and the brown wrists tattoed with a true lover's knot, and a Union Jack, and blue anchors. And I still could descry the short stubby nose, which used to give such a merry lift to his

mouth, and the scar on his cheek, that filled up when he laughed, as to my recollection he was generally doing. For if ever there had been a man who was fond of his joke, it was my Uncle William. But, alas! there were very few more for him now.

In the morning, I carried his bit of breakfast up, as my mother had arranged it on a little tea-tray; but he took a long time to make out who I was, though my mother, of course, had said a great deal about me.

"Tommy? What Tommy? I remember lots of Tommies;" he said, with a pleasant smile still on his face, although it was so gray and wasted; "there was Tommy, the cook's mate on board the *Saucy Lass*, and Tommy the cabin-boy, in the *Erysipelas*, and Tommy the cheating old nigger at Rio, and Tommy that had the dodge for catching flying fish, and Tommy——"

"No, sir, no; your own nephew Tommy. Tommy Upmore, that used to be a little boy at the soap-works, when you came back from sea, and you tossed him through the ceiling, and his head stuck fast. But you are not to talk; you must only think about it."

He obeyed me, like a child, looking at me now and then, as if to refresh his memory, while I held the tea-cup to his lips, and put some buttered toast into his mouth, between whiles. And the great jaws, that used to lift a kitchen-table, could scarcely crush the soft toast, without the tea to help them.

"Mother will come in, and sit with you now," I said, when he had eaten as much as he could manage; "and at eleven o'clock, you will have a bowl of soup, and a glass of port wine; and after that, you go to sleep. We are not going to bother you with any doctor, at least, until the afternoon. And then perhaps Dr. Flebotham, a very clever man, who almost saved my dear father's life, will look in, to have a little chat with you."

"No, Tommy, no," he answered, looking at me steadily, as if his breakfast had supported him; "'twould only be running up a bill for nothing, and your mother has paid a deal too much for me already. But she shall have

it all back again, my boy, and a pretty penny on the top of it, if you can keep a secret. I can call you to mind, pretty clearly now; though not a bit like what you used to be, except for the swab on the top of your head. Can you keep a secret, Tommy boy?"

"Sir," I replied, with my eyes upon his, and my countenance full of decision; "it is the very thing that I have always been most famous for, of all the many things that I can do."

In spite of this very strong assurance, he seemed to be doubtful, as if I had said too much.

"How can you be famous for it," he asked, perhaps with some reason, "unless you are accustomed to brag about them? But 'tis Hobson's choice with me, Tommy, between you and your mother. And the youngest lad is safer than the very oldest woman. Get your dear mother to go upon an errand,—the longer the better,—when I am at my best, about noon of the day; and then get me a pipe, to improve my breath; and you shall know what there is, so far as I can fetch my wind to tell it. I remember all about you, my lad, now."

I put my fingers to my lips, to convince him what an enemy I was to excess of conversation; and I saw that he was pleased, and it helped to satisfy him, that there could be no mistake in trusting me. And the way in which I managed to get my mother off the premises, was enough to establish my repute in this way. For I told her what was true, that after all the many years Mrs. Windsor, and she, had been such hearty and warm friends, never falling out—except once for three years, upon the question whether when you sew a button on a shirt, the thread should be wound round the stitches that go through it, before fastening off, or whether (as my mother said) that does more harm than good—after all this staunch and uninterrupted love, it would seem a very heartless thing on her side, if she failed to set off, at the first hour allowed by good breeding for call (which in Maiden Lane was always eleven o'clock, except upon a washing-day), and congratulate her cordially, and find out everything about the engagement of Polly to Bill Chumps.

My dear mother was quite as eager to do this, as I to persuade her of the duty of it; supposing only that Uncle Bill could get on without her, for two hours and a half. Two hours and a half meant five, I knew; for two hours at least would be spent in cabs; inasmuch as my mother never got into a cab, without making the driver go all the way, according to her own directions. This being to him an increase of income, he was glad to navigate accordingly, and enjoyed a geographical lecture at the end of the journey, which was worth another shilling to him. For my dear mother felt a great truth, which has never been properly felt by our School-boards, so that the foundation of their scheme is rotten; viz., that people must be paid for learning; which is perhaps the saddest trial of the human life.

Uncle Bill should have been depressed, and frightened, by this first parting from his kindly watchful nurse; but he took quite a different view of the matter, and resolved to have all the pipes that he could get, and a glass of hot grog, with the window open.

"Surely it is bad for you, sir," I said.

But he answered, "My son, what do you know about it? I am making my accounts up for a better world; and what good-will can I hope for, if I cast them up all dry?"

As soon as he had made himself quite comfortable, with an ounce of best bird's-eye, and three clean pipes, and the appearance of more rum not far off, he said, "Tommy, lock the door, and put the key beneath the baccy-box, and let me know if your dear mother happens to turn back, for women are very liable to do that sort of thing. Very well; now come and sit close by me. I can't spin a long yarn, for want of wind, nor yet a very plain one; but you must help it out.

"About three years ago, after knocking about in a lot of little craft, in the Indian seas, sometimes up, and sometimes down, according to the fortunes of seafaring men, I was skipper of a schooner in the sponge and coral trade, or the Beachymess, or anything that might turn up, from a

terrapin to a tarpaulin, as we say. We were trading with the natives, between whiles, every man on his own hook, with his own ventures, while we waited for the super-cargo's orders, according as he landed to get freight. And not being full, he took us to the—well, never mind, what islands, but a very savage part, where the people are idolaters, and cannibals. Here there was a settlement of white men, hailing from every land under the sun almost, where it doesn't turn them black, and make niggers of them. As lazy a lot as could be found pretty well, but they kept themselves with fire-arms against the natives, and collected goods for shipment, in a fort they had set up.

"We had orders from the factor, who was also part-owner of the craft, whose name was the *Saucy Lass*, to leave him at the fort, for a couple of days, while we made the opposite coast, about three leagues off; to traffic for ourselves, if we could, and to lay in provisions, and our stock of water. For the water at the fort, though very good while fresh, would not keep three days in cask, when out at sea. He showed us where beautiful water could be got, and plenty of cassavas, yams, and such like, and fruit none of us knew the names of. But he warned us to be on our guard, and stand off at night, and keep the brass guns loaded, for the natives of that island were much worse than this; and these were bad enough, in all conscience. There was no reef between the two islands, but one enormous reef round both of them, with water as clear as plate glass inside, and a light air, and sands that shone like snow.

"We found the pretty stream of good water, as he told us, and began to take in our supply with the boats, for we carried more hands than is usual aboard a schooner of three hundred tons, several having shipped without much wages, on the chance of doing something for themselves; and there was not a Lascar among them, but mostly British, and two or three Germans. So that we were not afraid of half a thousand savages, without treachery, or surprise, or some other dirty trick.

"But the part where we landed showed no sign, at first, of having any living creatures upon it bigger than wild pigs, and goats, and an animal something like a hare, that was very good eating; and the quantity of fruit upon the trees was such, that most of us found ourselves doubled up with colic. But I served out a good supply of cordials for that; and afterwards, the fine appearance of the place, and the softness of the air, and the colour of the ground (which was almost as good as a meadow to us) seemed to make us sleepy, and inclined to lie about.

"And it would not be true of me to tell you, Tommy, that I was the breadth of a rope's end better than the hands put under me. I never was very strong for discipline, from knowing that I should not like to have it done to me, and being more used to come under it than over it, according to the want of luck and money. But we happened to have a very good Scotch mate, whose name was Rob McAlister.

"'Captain,' he says to me, when I was lying easy, on a bank of some stuff that was as soft as feathers, and wishing I had somebody to fill my pipe, and light it; 'Captain, it mis-gi'es me much, but we be o'erfeckless.'

"'You go to Jericho, Rob,' I answered; 'or fill my pipe first; and strike me a light, and then go to the top of that rock, and look out.'

"Before I had finished my pipe, he came back, and told me that the woods were so thick inland, that they might hold a thousand people, without showing one. But he felt almost sure that he had heard a screech, not of a bird or wild beast, but a man; and this made me pay some attention, because I knew that his hearing was wonderfully sharp; for he had saved us once, by hearing breakers through a full gale of wind at night, when no other man could perceive the sound.

"'Call the hands together, and draw down to the boats,' was the order I gave; 'I shall be down there myself, by the time you have got them ready.' But whether I fell off to sleep, or what, is more than I can tell; only one thing is certain, the men were at the boats, before I was near them, and before I had begun to think at all about it. Then they sent a lad to fetch

me, whose name was Tommy, understrapper to the cook; but before he could find me, a terrible scream made me sit up, and look round. Upon the slope behind me, were a lot of darkies running, and in front of them a white man, flying for his life, who had clearly caught sight of our boats, just when his case seemed altogether hopeless.

"Our men had seen him, and were pushing out a little; while others waved their guns, and shouted to him, to put on his last bit of speed, and they would save him. From the place where they stood, they could see the great multitude of his pursuers, which I could not do; and this made me wrong them, in thinking them cowards, for not coming up the hill, to help. Meanwhile he was coming down the hill, with his breath too short to be used, and his heart pumped out, and his naked legs covered with blood, and his face as white as birch-bark, and as resolute as iron. Three of his pursuers were in front of the rest, and not more than thirty yards behind him, and each bore a javelin, which he would not throw yet, for fear of missing aim in the rush of it. None of them had seen me, where I sat and watched them, through the bush that sheltered me.

"I saw that they must pass, within a few yards of my lair, so I crawled behind a tree which was feathered with some creepers, and there stood upright, with my double-barrelled shot-gun, which I luckily had brought for the chance of game. Then I gave a little whistle, and the flying man descried me, and turned in that direction. 'Don't stop,' I whispered; and he saw what I meant, and continued down the hill, as if he had not seen me. Then as his three pursuers rushed past the tree, I let out with my fist at the left ear of the nearest one, and sent him sprawling; then I shot the two others as dead as a door-nail, before they could turn to lance me. Big limber fellows they were both; one of them fell forward on his head, and turned a somersault, down the steep ridge he was so hastily descending.

"'On, for your life!' I cried, 'you are too blown to fight. Tell the mate to come with half a dozen men to meet me.' He doubted for a moment about leaving me, but seeing me loading again in all haste, and the rest of his pursuers standing still in great amazement, on he went, and I

could hear him panting down the hill. Then as soon as I had loaded, I made after him with speed; seeing which, the other savages set up a fearful whoop, and came rushing down the hill, perhaps three hundred altogether. Two javelins hissed over my head; and then I turned, and dropping on my knee, sent two heavy loads of duck-shot, right into the faces of the foremost. This dropped three or four of them, and the rest stopped again, as if they had never seen a thing like this before; and the roar of the gun among the rocks was not a trifle. Without stopping to load again, on I hastened, and met Bob, and six sturdy fellows, eager for a shot.

"'Not yet,' I cried, 'not until we are aboard; and then let us give them a general salute.'

"All saw the force of this, and as soon as we had lifted the poor runaway into my boat, we pushed off, when somebody exclaimed—'Why, wherever is poor Tommy?' It was this boy's scream which had so luckily aroused me; and then in his terror he had tumbled on a rock, and lay there stunned, until the present moment. Tommy was a favourite with every one, and it was impossible to leave him to be killed; so the mate, and two others, volunteered to go and fetch him; although it was no small danger, because the savages had rallied, and were coming on again. But we sat ready, with our guns presented, and mis-liking perhaps the look of them the villains hesitated. So our three men brought poor Tommy to the water's edge, and we gave them a good cheer, which they heartily deserved. We saw little Tommy hoisted on the back of Bob McAlister, for his legs had quite failed him; and just as we were stretching out our arms, to ease him in, the savages let fly at us a volley of their javelins.

"'Give it them!' I cried, and every gun rang out with a fine blaze of fire, for the evening was set in. Away scampered every baccy-coloured skin that could; for at least half a score of them could move no more. But alas, they had done for our poor little Tommy! A javelin had passed through his loin, and pinned him to the brave mate's shoulder, so that he was

dead in about five minutes. Our men were so enraged, that they longed to land again, and go after the savages; but I would not allow it, with night coming on, and two of our number wounded. So we made for the *Saucy Lass*, and got on board, tired with our day's work, and very sad about poor little Tommy. Now, my lad, I am not come to the chief part yet; but I can't tell any more, for coughing now. Find something for your mother to be off about, to-morrow; and perhaps if you behave yourself, you shall hear the rest of it."

CHAPTER XXXII.
A PAIR OF BLUE EYES.

My mother, who was very sharp about some things, could not have failed to discover from me, or else from Uncle Bill, who was as simple as a child, that he had spent a long time in telling me a portion of one of his manifold adventures; which recalled to my mind, once or twice, the rare doings of that grandest of all rovers, Captain Robinson Crusoe. But when she returned from a very long visit to Mrs. Windsor, she had such a quantity not only to tell, but to give her own opinion on, and to get it confirmed by mine (whenever she could stop), that it was next to impossible for her to look about, as she generally did, or even wait to be talked to, unless it was about the matter she was so wrapped up in. And she declared that she had not heard a quarter of it yet; being forced by her duties here, to come away abruptly—though she could not have had less than five hours there, however well she steered the cabman—and if she could only be sure, that her dear invalid would not miss her so very much, she had promised to go again, and give her very humble advice about many things, to-morrow. It was very painful for her—she confessed that freely—when she remembered what might have been; and £12,125 might better have stopped in the boiling connection, than gone into the meat trade, to buy up opposition. However, her dear boy would not break his heart; had he cared to come forward, he might have put a spoke in somebody's wheel; and there always had been something about Polly, which she would be the last to remind her mother of.

When the coast was quite clear, as Captain. William expressed it, after looking down the "drive," as we called it (which was very nearly twelve yards long, whenever the gate was opened outwards), and receiving a wave from a new white handkerchief—for my dear mother had taken three that day, having wept into her capstrings yesterday—he made his preparations, or directed me to make them, for a very long voyage in the

narrative trade. He had three pipes ready, not to smoke them hot, for fear of any tendency towards coughing, and a glass of "regulation," to be served when he made signal, and his little spy-glass handy, that he might see the bus from Hampstead, at a turn of the road a long way up the hill; and he always expected to see sailors on it, and if he saw one, he would be sure to drink his health.

"Tommy," he said in a determined tone; "I mean to have a quid, and no mistake. It is six months now, since I have had a quid. In the pocket of that coat behind the door——"

"But, sir," I answered, looking at him with surprise; "you have been most strictly forbidden to do it. You spoke of it yesterday, and Dr. Flebotham said that congestion at least might ensue. Try to wait till mother comes, and if she allows it——"

"Don't be crafty, Tommy, now. I hate crafty people. Your mother would never allow it, you know well; and my only chance for it is, when she is gone away. Do as I tell you. I am the skipper here. Mutiny, indeed, from a younker just shipped! You won't hear another word, until you bring my knife from the pocket with the yellow button to it, and a cake of Cavendish from the little midship locker. Very good; now cut where I scar my nail. It's not so much the comfort of it that I want, as to keep the throat juicy, and prevent me coughing, from hauling so many dry words out of my hold. Very well done, Tommy; I shall promote you. Now, where did I break my yarn off?"

"About your all getting safe into the ship, sir, with two men wounded, and poor little Tommy dead. And you said, you hadn't come to the best part yet. Though I thought it was very good indeed already."

"Well, my son, you shall hear the rest of it, and judge. As soon as we had brought ourselves round with victuals, for the sake of the hard day we had been through, I sent for the man we had rescued, and held a long talk with him in my cabin. As yet, I have only been able to meet with two men who had the gift of gratitude, and both of those happened to be

Welshmen. The name of this man was Rees Edwards; and a smarter hand never went aloft. Welshmen, as a rule, are not first-rate seamen; but when they are good, they beat everything; and Rees Edwards was the best of them I ever came across. His last trip had been in an American bark called the *Beaver*, engaged in the Beachymess, and sponge-trade, among these Pacific islands. She had struck in the night, on the great coral-reef surrounding these two islands, and a smart breeze from seaward setting in, they had found it impossible to haul her off. A heavy sea got up, and she broached to, with the rocks grinding through her timbers. But the crew contrived to launch their boats, and finding a passage through the reef, made land, and were very soon surrounded by the natives.

"These fellows shammed to be as good as gold at first, (though of course they knew nothing of their lingo) and supplied them with food, and gave them huts to live in, and laid themselves out to be obliging. So that the castaways, eighteen in number, began to go about the place, as if they were at home, and prepared, with the rough tools they could make, to build a craft big enough to carry them away. But suddenly two of their number were missing, and then two more, and then another couple; and the natives endeavoured to persuade them by signs, that these had only wandered away into the woods, and would soon find their way home again. The surviving dozen did their best to hope so, but took more care to keep together, and not to go abroad at all at night.

"But very soon, they found out the horrible meaning of it. For suddenly the savages, having lost all patience, with their appetites whetted by the relish of white flesh, fell upon them in the night, and killed them all but three, leaving nothing but their bones by the morrow night. Those three they kept alive, because they were too thin; until they fattened up two, and devoured them. The third, and last, was our friend Rees Edwards, who fell into a melancholy frame of mind, and refused to grow eatable, upon any kind of ration. So they put him in the temple, where they kept

their chief idol, believing that this would improve his texture, and consecrating him to be sacrificed, whether he were fat, or whether he were lean, upon the appearance of the following moon.

"Edwards, however, was a very clever fellow, and pretending to be altogether resigned to his fate, obtained some privileges, as a holy man now, and devoted to the glory of their great idol, *Jumbilug*. He kept a sharp watch upon the moon as well; and took strengthening victuals, as he saw her getting thinner. He had learned a good deal of their lingo by this time, and found out from them about the white man's fort, over against the further end of that island. And the very night before the new moon would appear, he slipped through a hole, which he had long been boring in the mud wall of the joss-house, and escaped into the woods, with a long start of his enemies. He made his way eastward by the stars, till sunrise, and eastward the whole of the following day, with his enemies upon his track, as you have heard already.

"'Now, captain,' he said, when his tale was finished; 'you have done me the best turn one man can do another; and I wish I could make you some small return. *Jumbilug* is the finest woman I ever saw; and it would not be so very hard to run away with her.'

"I told him, that this was not in my line at all, having always been shy of the sex; except to make a joke, or pass a compliment. But he laughed, and said—

"'No fear of her tongue, captain, although she has got a very handsome one; and her teeth are all pearls, and her lips are coral, and her eyes are as blue as the sky, and much brighter, and her hair is spun gold; you never saw such a beauty.'

"'I don't care a d—n for all that,' I replied, 'a woman aboard is the devil himself.'

"But, when I found that all these beauties were real, and could have no deception about them, (because the fair woman was made of wood) I became very eager to possess these charms, if it might be done, without

fool-hardiness. Edwards assured me, that with a little dash, and management, it might well be done; for *Jumbilug's* house was a good bit away from the town of these savages, and very near the sea. And if we desired to punish the barbarians—as every man John of us burned to do—for the murder of poor little Tommy, and the massacre, roasting, and devouring of seventeen helpless white men, nothing could be such a desperate blow to them, as to lose their idol. For generation, after generation, had spent their best treasures in adorning her.

"'If she's worth a penny, she's worth £50,000; and they'd rather lose their biggest chief, and all their wives, and daughters. I'm no judge of jewels, captain, but her eyes are something to beat all female embellishment. They come after you, all over the place, and they shine by night, like a million fire-flies. The tradition of the people is, that they were brought by a bird with great wings, from a country far away; perhaps an old trading ship from Borneo. Anyhow, there they are; and the pearls of teeth, as big as my thumb pretty nearly, and the tongue some red jewel they pick out of the rocks, and the hair spun gold almost down to her waist, and the whole of the breast covered up with fine pearls—ah, you should have seen her when the full moon shone, as it did upon the night when I was dedicated!'

"This description, my dear Tommy, produced a very fine effect upon my mind. I have heard your dear mother say, a hundred times, that nothing is so elevating to the male nature as admiration of a virtuous female. And where could I hope to find any female, half so virtuous as *Jumbilug*? But I cautioned Rees Edwards, not to let our fellows know, what the value of this fair maiden was.

"'You are right,' he made answer, 'we should lose half her pearls; though the other things won't come out easily at all. When the priest was asleep one night, I just ventured to feel the bright tip of her tongue; but it was firm, anchored in good holding ground. We must have a scheme to bring her off entire, and not let them know that we do it for her value, but for

the outrage and cruelty of them. All that we can plan out afterwards; but first find out, whether they are up for it. Of course if they are not, we can't drive them to it.'

"I questioned our fellows about this matter, and found them not only quite ready, but eager, and I might say wild, to go forth upon this venture. And that, not only for the spree, as sailors call it; but with the prospect combined, of revenge for the loss of little Tommy, and of punishing niggers for eating superior flesh, and of bringing back snug bits of plunder, on their own account. For I promised them everything they could lay hold of, and carry away, except *Jumbilug* herself—not for her value, as I told them plainly, but as a curiosity for a Museum; which might even give me £50 for her. They knew that I had never been a greedy man, and they promised to give me some of their own share, if it should be worth my acceptance.

"Being hard-set for time, we resolved to do it, on the very next night, having made up our minds to keep our allies at the fort outside it, because of the claims they might set up. There would be no moon, and those wretched man-eaters would be all fast asleep, as Rees Edwards told us, within two hours after sunset. They might have set a watch upon the schooner; but they could not see boats at that distance from the shore, and they had no canoes on this side of the point. So we left the wounded men, to mind the craft, with the two brass carronades loaded; and slipped off, all in the yawl this time, ten of us, I think, besides the Welshman, with muffled oars, and all guns loaded.

"By water the distance was less than by land, and with Rees Edwards steering, we made the land, right under the joss-house in about three hours. It was very dark here; for the starlight was shut out, by trees overhanging the water; and leaving two hands to mind the yawl, and just keep her afloat, for all was calm as a duck-pool, nine of us landed with guns and axes, and without a word, made for the temple.

"We found the very hole, by which Edwards had escaped, only roughly stopped with brushwood, which we removed quietly; and then the Welshman entered, and went round the place, knowing every corner of it, as soft as a mouse, and then came back, and whispered—

"'Only the old priest here, and he's snoring in the lobby. Captain, come in, and the rest wait signal.' This had been settled between us; and first we gagged the old priest, and corded him, for he was not a bad fellow, compared with some, and had been pretty good to his captive. Then we rolled up *Jumbilug*, whose eyes were sparkling, in a piece of sailcloth, which I had brought for the purpose, and we lashed it round her ankles, and above her golden hair. Then we ran to the front gate, and let in our fellows, and they struck a light, and looked about them.

"There was plenty of glitter, and a lot of little images, and Brummagem beads, and bits of glass, and such like, but very little gold—except *Jumbilug's* own—for the island produced none, I dare say. However, there were pearls upon almost every image, and a lot of lovely shells, and shining spar, and coral. Every man took whatever caught his eye, while Edwards and myself lifted *Jumbilug*, who was about five feet long, from her pedestal, and carried her—though she was a precious weight—to the boat, and laid her in the stern-sheets. Then we ran back, and fetched out our men, for fear of accidents; and all well-laden made off in high feather. And it was high time, I can tell you, Master Tommy, for we heard a tremendous row, before we turned the point, screeching, and wailing, and the shrieks of women. Perhaps they had seen our lights up in the village, which was not more than half a mile away, and the building had windows in the dome made of talc, or some such half-transparent stuff. We were heartily pleased with our job, and gave them three cheers for their liberality.

"In the morning, we made sail for the fort all pledged to say nothing about our exploit, even to the factor; but every man stowing away his own loot, without any quarrelling about it, and, of course, giving proper share to those outside. But when Rees Edwards came into my cabin, and

we unrolled *Jumbilug* privately, I can tell you that I stared, as I never stared before at any female figure. She was ten times as gorgeous as he had described her; and the wealth of whole ages was in and upon her. I insisted that Edwards should take his fair share, though he laid no claim to anything. We stood her upright against the bulk-head, as handsome as paint, and as bright as a star; and then we looked at her, and she looked at us, as if begging us not to spoil her beauty.

"'First choice to you, captain,' said the Welshman; but I answered, 'No, let us toss for it;' and so we did, and I won, and made choice of her eyes. And then we went on, turn and turn, until there was nothing left but the wooden block; and even that was very clever, I can tell you, and would fetch £50 for a museum, I believe. He got the teeth, which I was very glad of,—a dozen large pearls half as big as my thumb; but I got the golden hair, and made a present of it all, except one lock, to Rob McAlister, who was prouder of it than of his sweetheart. Also I got—but there, what's the use of talking of it? You have heard what careless scattergoods all honest sailors are. There is nothing left of all of it, but only these here; and they'd have gone long ago, but for being in my caul."

Uncle William sighed a little, at the end of his long yarn, as if he should never spin such another; and then, from inside the blue woollen thing he wore on the hoops of his ribs, out he pulled a little packet, something (like a worn-out piece of bladder from a jam-pot) rolled, and tied with yellow silk.

"Open it yourself," he said, "but have a care of my caul, young Tommy, which has saved me fifteen times from drowning; though the Lord knows, I shall never want it any more. This old ship is chartered for a voyage to Kingdom come. Perhaps that Coast-fever has been and spoiled the colour of them. I haven't seen them, now, for a twelvemonth or more; though I feel 'em going into my ribs pretty often. One will be for you, and one for your mother; as soon as you have put me under ground."

"Uncle Bill," I said, "we don't mean to do anything of that kind. You shan't go aloft, as you call it, for forty years yet. Why, what most wonderful things, I declare! What lovely gold, and what amazing stones!"

He looked at me with a very pleasant smile; "Something like your hair, the gold is spun up, Tommy, ain't it? Only yours have got more touch of nut-colour in it. Indian work, that is, I reckon; stolen out of some wreck, with the stones, no doubt. No savage work there, and no English goldsmith, nor French either, could come near it. Mysore, or Tanjore, or Trichinopoly; but I believe the stones must have come from Borneo. At least, so the only knowing man I ever showed them to, thought they must have done, though he couldn't say how; and *Jumbilug* had worn them for three hundred years, at a rough guess; for ten men's time, the savages told Edwards. He told me, he believed they must be blue diamonds; but I never heard of such things; I call them sapphires. And I wouldn't tell you, what the island is—why, do you think? Because such a Government as we've got now, would insist upon what they call 'restitution.' They'd send out one of them iron pig troughs things they have turned the British navy into to re-build *Jumbilug*, and fit her up again, with her eyes at our expense; and all the rest at the cost of the British taxpayers; and then give her a Royal salute, and steam away, for fear of hurting the feelings of the natives."

"And perhaps," I replied—for this reminded me of Roly's views upon that subject—"they would put half a hundred of plump Englishmen ashore, as a meet and proper offering to the injured *Jumbilug*."

CHAPTER XXXIII.
STRONG INTENTIONS.

Such a weight came off the heart of good Uncle William, and such a relief was afforded to his ribs—where the parcel had made a great hole, as he showed me like the postmaster's stamp on a bonnet-box—that as soon as he restored his caul to its proper and inborn aptitude of comfort, he was enabled to be just to another tidy quid, and another glass of grog, not so very fountain-heady.

"Don't let me see them any more," he said, when he found himself ready for a bit to eat; "they have buttoned up the locker of my poor stomach, and I believe that's how I took the fever, to which I was never born natural. But not a word to your dear mother about them, until I tip the signal. That old Jew wanted, oh, how he did try, to get these beauties out of me! He would have given me a thousand pounds apiece for them; and that proves them to be worth at least ten times as much. Get a fair opinion about them, my lad; and then lock them away, unless you want the money."

I could not help admiring the very clever way, in which Uncle William had encircled the blue stones with the spun wreath of pure gold, as fine as any hair, quite as if they were a pair of brooches in gold setting. And this fetched the colour up, or made them show by contrast, with a lustre, at once very clear and very dark; though both of the crystals were still in the rough. They were something like a pear in form; which explains little, for pears are as different in shape as men are. What I mean is a pear of the variety which the dealers call the "Duchess," which tapers less than the Jargonelle, but much more than the Bergamots. Between the two crystals there was very little difference, in size, or weight, or

colour, each of them turning an ounce in the scales. But much as I admired them, and could look at them for hours; it did not seem likely that they could be worth what Uncle William talked about.

Upon this point I determined to consult Professor Megalow, who knew nearly as much about stones as bones; till I saw in the *Times* that he was sent to Egypt, upon some important scientific errand; and then it occurred to me to ask Sir Roland. Not that he was likely to know anything about it, but that he might commend me to a skilful and upright jeweller, such as a family of rank and wealth were likely to have dealings with.

And even while I was thinking of him, up he rode, in his usual haste, upon a showy-looking hack; for the Twentifolds had given up their London establishment, at the death of the previous baronet. With very great pleasure, I ran down to meet him; for although "Placid Bower" was not very grand, I knew that he would be well pleased with it, his nature being very kind, and frank, and hearty. Of course he spoke first, for he always took the lead.

"Why, Tommy, what a beautiful place you have got! I envy you, my dear boy, that I do. And such a look out! You can see the Victoria tower, and read the clock over the bridge with a moderate glass; and on a clear day, you can see the Derby run. You rogue, you never told me of this snug shop, the very place for an industrious M.P. And that is what I'm come about; as well as the pleasure of seeing you, my dear friend, and your good mother."

"Mother will be home in an hour or two," I said; "and we'll make your horse comfortable, and you too, I hope. She is gone to see Bill Chumps' intended, and advise about all the great preparations. He is going to marry Miss Windsor, who has come into a tidy little lump of money—£12,125, entirely at her own disposal. But of course, they will have a settlement."

"Holloa!" he answered; "well that beats me. I thought you were sweet in that quarter, Master Tommy. But you look very jolly, so I hope it is all right. Take me into your own den first. I want to have a pipe, and a chat with you. Well, here we are! Just the sort of place I like. Books enough to look at, and remind you of past woes; with their backs shown like scattered enemies. But I don't half like this news of yours. I did not mean Chumps to get married, for ten years. It takes all the enterprise out of a man. On the other hand, the cash will be handy for him, and enable him to apply himself to politics, though not half enough to live upon. But I have very large ideas in my head. When do they mean to be made miserable for life?"

"Somewhere this side of Michaelmas, my mother seems to say. They have long been engaged, though old Chumps would not have it, until her Godfather discharged responsibilities. You are quite wrong, Roly, in supposing that I have any call, for a moment, to wear the willow. It is true that Miss Windsor, and your most obedient, have been very intimate from tender years, and ever must cherish sweet memories of playing together in the soapsuds. But she does not approach—she in no way realizes—she never has been to me more than a bubble."

"Tommy, your metaphor is fine; and (which is a much greater rarity) appropriate. Now, let us consider how all this bears on the one ambition of my life, and of every life at all worth living—the kicking of the Rads off the foul perch they are crowing on. They have made it foul, mind. It was clean enough, when they hopped up, by cackling, and flapping their wings, and nudging sideways, as if they meant rather to go down, than up. All the honest cocks on the top bar took it easy, and put their heads under their wings, and tucked up one leg, and spread out the claws of the other; till down they went headlong, tumbling on their combs at the rush of a cock, who had sworn he would not fight. And fight he won't now, to preserve his hen's eggs; but only to keep his own perch to himself, and the few little bantams he allows to come up. Meanwhile, rats and weasels increase and flourish; not a sound egg of trade is there left in the nest; and of all the fat chicks of the colonies, not one is allowed to jump up on

the mother's broad back, and practice a little crow, under her protection. In fact, my dear Tommy, the big cock of all, having crowed himself up to the top of the roost, has forbidden every other cock to chuckle in his throat, unless it is in chorus with him. Meanwhile, his own run is on every side invaded, and his chicks carried off, and his corn-bin robbed; but all he cares for is to keep his own perch, and be clucked to, as if he were the only cock on earth."

"I dare say that is all true enough," I answered; "but I don't see how we are to better it. What can two little cockerels, such as you and I, do?"

"Tommy, it is that accursed spirit, or want of spirit, that keeps the pest triumphant. I am a very little cockerel; as you say, and should bite the dust before the old rooster. Reason and right go down before him, and all the old principles of patriotism are a mixen for him to crow on. But why? There have been infinitely finer cocks, who would have rolled in the dirt, if they had tried to cut such capers. The reason is simply craven terror, and the want of firm union against him. Truth, and common sense, and common interests, must prevail in the end; if only they are backed up against crowing humbug. And it is the first duty of every one, who cares for his country, to bear his little share in this. Eloquence, eloquence, is all the cry—unrivalled eloquence, vast experience, unparalleled powers of mind, and so forth. But all of these cannot turn black into white, nor prove that we are clean, when they have dragged us through the mud. We are bad enough now, with our Country despised, our manufactures ruined, our agriculture bankrupt, our land worth nothing, our army made an infant-school, and our kingdom rent in twain; but madness, ten times worse than that, is threatened, and promised, for the very next Session."

"Well, let us hear the worst of it;" I answered very calmly, being used to these rodomontades of Sir Roland's, and not having found myself much the worse yet. "What does the enemy mean to do, next year?"

"You may smile, Tommy. I am afraid you are as bad as the rest; who won't try to stop the blow, until their backs are broken. What do you think of these three little measures, out of seven, which the Cabinet propose to employ the Recess in preparing, and maturing, as they call it? To give the county franchise to every man who has a dust-bin, or even a dust-pan if he lives a hundred miles from London. To prohibit landowners from having any children, after a date to be settled by the Act. To abandon Malta, Gibraltar, and Aden, and all other places held unjustly, and surrender the British fleet, and all ships of war now building, to France, and Russia, and the Irish Land League. A pretty fair programme I call that."

"And so should I, Roly, if I believed a word of it. But don't carry on with any more such chaff. Have a glass of good ale, good English malt, a sound constitutional draught, as you call it. I ordered in a firkin, and it has just got bright."

"Now, if Englishmen drank this," exclaimed Sir Roland, after a good pull at the fresh, and freshening beverage, in my silver pot, one of the many I had earned as coxswain of victorious crews, "if Britons, instead of whining about their digestions, and sipping the flat sourness of half-ripened grapes, took a good swig of such hearty stuff as that, very soon we should be Britons again. The need of the age is good ale, my Tommy; not the public-house stuff, but the genuine thing, such as every good brewery can turn out when it likes. The decay of the nation, and the triumph of the hypocrites date from the difficulty of getting decent beer. And think of the brotherhood created by good beer. I take a pull, Tommy, so do you; we look at one another, and we trust one another, and a mutual warmth goes down into our glad bosoms. Will you get such a feeling from your sulky glass of claret, or your poisonous artificial waters, or even the fizz-up-the-nose of your touch-and-go Champagne? No, my boy. One of my most cherished hopes is to supply the noble working-man, with a real good article in the way of ale; and then let him be a Rad, or let him be a Tory—at any rate he will be an Englishman again. Let us have another pull, to illustrate that sentiment."

I could not help laughing at Sir Roland's warmth, and confidence. Whatever he said, he had a way of saying, (without gesticulation, or appearance of excitement) which made at once a short cut into the mind of any listener. Perhaps because it came so straight, and clear, and sure, from his own mind; and generally in simple words, which are the wings of eloquence.

"Now, tell me what you came for, Roly," I said, being tired of politics; "have you any news from home, or anything of interest to the beer-quaffing Briton? I don't care twopence about the Government. They can't do any harm, for six months now."

"Can't they, indeed? Why, that is the very season, when they disgrace us most of all, without even having to cut the double shuffle, in answer to any honest question. However, as you don't want any more of that—though you must be roused up before February—I'll do what I can for you, in smaller matters. Understand, then, that poor Counterpagne—who ought to have made a better fight of it; I don't think an old man could have punished me like that, though I should be devilish sorry to give him such occasion—he has got no bones broken, any more than you had, when the rock gave you such a thumping. But it would have been better for him, if he had; as regards his popularity at our place. My mother won't go near him; which she must have done, if his damage had been more dangerous. You know, my darling mother is a little bit sentimental, and by no means worldly-minded; but the most stubborn of the stubborn, in her quiet, and very gentle way. She won't argue a point; she will let one talk for ever, without a word of contradiction; and there her conviction remains, as unmoved as the table one has been talking over. I knew by her face, that Sunday evening, that it was all up with Counterpagne's chance of Laura."

"Thank God!" I cried, for the news was well worth it; and then at his look of astonishment I said, "Your dear sister, in my opinion, is the most perfect of all created beings; and I would rather have my eyes put out,

than see her made miserable, by a heartless, selfish, weak-minded, cold-natured, priggish, and altogether unprincipled fellow, who could never have the smallest idea of her value."

"You seem to be uncommonly warm about it, Tommy. What has poor Counterpagne ever done to you? He has his faults, I know; and he is not a sound Conservative. But he has scarcely enough character, to be so bad as you suppose him."

"He has a great deal more character, or want of it, than you think. And now that I can do him no harm with you, I will tell you a thing which I have kept to myself; though I had a hard job to conceal it from you, when I saw him continually at your sister's side. Some days before that Nathan and David business, and the very fine thrashing he received, I got a letter from an old friend of mine at *Corpus*, which was sent on to me from this place. And the writer, (without knowing more of Lord Counterpagne, than that Chumps knew him, and I knew Chumps) said that he had met him at his Club in London, where he was by no means popular. And then, at the very time when he was preparing to visit you, and carry on his courtship, he was living with an actress of very low repute, and had promised (as she said) to marry her. With that I have nothing to do; and I know that it is not supposed now to be any harm at all. But I thought it a low thing, for him to come, fresh from such company, and hold your sister's hand."

"You are quite right, Tommy; it was a low thing; and no gentleman, who thought twice, would have done it. And over and above all that, you know that I have a great contempt for Counterpagne."

"I know that you have. How can you help it? And yet for some trumpery bits of ground, or some dirty seat in Parliament, you have been eager to sacrifice the purest, and warmest, and sweetest heart in all the world, to such a wretch!"

"Tommy, you speak hotly, and a little beyond your business. What makes you take up this question so intensely?"

Sir Roland looked at me, in such a way, that I resolved to have it out with him, and sail, or sink, at least under true colours.

"The simple fact," I said, looking full into his eyes, for no man should frighten me, in a manly business, "that I love your sister, as purely, and entirely, as even she can deserve to be loved. There is not the least necessity, for you to tell me, that I am a presumptuous fool or ass, or anything else that you like to call me, for daring to do such a thing. But I have dared it; and shall dare it, all my life. And though I have very little hope of success; it has done me good, and has elevated me. Not in the social scale, I mean, or any of that stuff, but as a man—a man who has a right to give his heart, though he may get nothing but disdain, for it. I have wanted, for a long time, to tell you this; that we might understand each other. You have seen my reluctance to accept favours from you—to get put into the House, and so on. I could not do that, while I kept you in the dark, about a thing likely to change all your feelings. You cannot say now, that I have humbugged you."

Sir Roland, though generally so quick of reply, as almost to snap the words out of one's mouth, took so much time to think, that I felt my heart beat, like the wing of a bird that is rising.

"Well, Tommy," he said, looking more perplexed than angry, and taking me by the hand; "you have spoken as a man; and I thank you for it. And you deserve, that I should speak with equal candour. I will not say anything to hurt your feelings, more than may be avoided. As regards money, and character, and education, and kindliness of nature, and warmth of heart, you are all that a man need desire for his sister. But as regards birth—my dear fellow, excuse me, you know that I would not say anything to pain you, about such an accident, if I could help it—there comes the point, which is hard to get over. We Twentifolds do not pretend to be, of royal, or even of noble descent, in the direct line; though we have intermarried often enough with the best blood in

England; but this we can say, that for five hundred years, we have always been of the foremost rank of commoners, and baronets, ever since such things were. In the last hundred years, there has only been one taint——"

"Oh, let me hear all about that," I exclaimed; "I am truly delighted, that there has been that. Was it in the tallow-line, my dear Roly?"

"No, sir, it was not. It was in oil and beeswax," he answered, with a frown which was very like a smile; "the subject is a sore one, and pursuit would make it sorer. You had better ask my mother, what the story is. She tells it, with simplicity and sympathy. But to come back to tallow—as you coarsely put it. Let everything between us be exactly as it was. After what you have done for Laura—who would not be alive, to marry any one, but for you—I shall not attempt to interfere between you. Like the present Government, I shall 'maintain an attitude of masterly inactivity;' which may, or may not, have the usual result—to wit, servile passivity. Not a word about this subject again between us; until I renew it. Also bear in mind one thing,—even if you succeed with my mother, and with Laura, you will not have my consent (without which nothing whatever can come of it) until you have done something great, and glorious, to win the fame, which leaps over all distinctions."

CHAPTER XXXIV.
FAMES FAMÆ.

What is a fame, that overleaps distinctions? And how may a poor fellow get hold of it? I knew a man once, who could crackle all his knuckles, like a pair of four-chambered revolvers, and then fire off his wrists, and elbows, like double-barrelled rifles, after them. We called him the "distinguished knuckle-duster;" and he called himself, the "famous artilleryman." Would an exploit of that sort overleap the pride of birth; and endow our humble candles with the winding-sheet of pedigree?

It was not in my nature, to be put down, without having something to say for it. My mind was of ordinary substance, and perhaps rather heavy; to balance the body, as well as to keep the heart company, at times when the pair were in trouble together. But my body was not a mere somebody, neither an anybody, nor a common nobody; but a substance, in some wise remarkable, and surely as distinguished as that of the great knuckle-duster. He had won fame, to his own satisfaction; by deeds more surprising to the public ear, but far less so to the public eye, than those of which I was capable.

Now, which is more potent, the ear, or the eye? Which throws the quickest flash into the brain, and fills it with action the longest? Even before we have learned enough of speech, to be certain that all men are liars, how slowly creep in, at the sides of the head, the things that leap in, at the front of it! "Hot are the stings of the eye, but cold the pains of the ear," says an ancient; pithier for once than Horace.

This being so, what should prevent me, from attaining a hotter fame than even Mr. Panclast's? He could beat his drum upon the ear alone, and sound his own trumpet into waxy cells; but I could fly straight into the retina of the brain, and block the whole traffic of the optic nerve.

"I will cultivate the lofty gifts of nature," I exclaimed, when everybody else was gone to bed; "for the sake of my country, I am bound to do it. Sir Roland was right, and the great Professor wrong. Why did he say to me—'Fly no more; aerial Tommy, fly no more'? Why, simply because he is a Rad, and foresees confusion to the Rad race, in my powers when developed. So far as my own convictions go, there is scarcely the seed of a fig, between a Rad, and a Tory, when they are let alone. But the difference is, that a Rad can be lashed up, like a half-broken horse, into any fit of kicking, and cares not a rap, what he smashes in his rage. But a Tory is far less impetuous; he has a much stronger perception of the rights of others, and especially of his country's claim upon him. Such are the men, who are needed now. Panclast has an extraordinary gift of lashing up quiet folk, to kick against their neighbours, and of running round the corner, when his own legs are in jeopardy. However, he is the master of the yard for the present, in virtue of his powers of swearing, Roly says—but there must be a great deal more than that."

The upshot of my very callow reflections, was that I determined, to begin, at once, to improve my long dormant aerial gifts. Or rather, I should say, my repressed, and snubbed, and even dreaded specialty, of rising from the ground. Although my frame was firmer, and more weighty than it used to be, and therefore less elastic, and expansive, than in boyhood, there was room enough to hope, that some of, if not all these losses might be retrieved, by care and skill, by regimen, strict diet, and the increased power of the muscles. And if these proved insufficient, there could be no doubt of one thing—a very little artificial aid would liberate me, from the growing tyranny of gravitation.

With all this in my mind, I went to bed, and dreamed a dream; which, contrary to the usual laws of such visitants, became of the very greatest service to me.

My conscience had reproached me, while I said my prayers, for a very unworthy, and unjust reflection, upon Professor Megalow, as above set down. From him, I had received the very greatest kindness; and to

imagine, that any party motives could have led him to dissuade me from invading the upper firmament, was very mean and nasty of me, as well as most absurd. He was not at all a partisan, or active politician, but quietly held his opinions, upon reasons which satisfied him, and therefore cannot have been weak ones. And my last thoughts, or nearly so, having been about him, he appeared to me naturally in my sleep.

I dreamed, that I stood between Professor Megalow and my old enemy, Professor Brachipod, in the schoolroom of the *Partheneion*. Dr. Rumbelow also was in the distance; with his college-cap on, and the biggest of all his canes under his arm. The two learned professors were discussing my case, with very great interest, and some warmth.

"He will never fly again," said Professor Megalow; "he is too solid now, and his bones are all set."

"The very reason for his flying all the more," quoth Brachipod, contradictory even in a dream. "He can not only mount, but propel himself now. See, I manipulate him, and off he goes, ten times as high as he ever went before!"

Then he did something to me, and up I went; while he shouted, "That proves my theory. Can anything be finer? Chocolous, Mullicles, and Jargoon, come and confess, what a set of fools you are. Bravo, Tommy, use your arms and legs!"

With such powerful action did I do this, while rushing up swift as a rocket, that I knocked half the roof of the *Partheneion* off, yet stuck fast somehow, and could scarcely breathe.

And no wonder; for round my neck, when I awoke, was the linen sheet, tight as a bowstring; while my poor arms and legs, instead of oaring ambient air, were all twisted up in the counterpane, and blanket, like an "apple-pie bed," combined with what we used to call "cat's cradle." But the worst of all was, that I could not remember, (though I sat up in the

bed, and thought, as soon as I was free) what in the world it was, that had been done to me, by Professor Brachipod, to send me up over people's heads at such a pace!

Neither, in the morning, could I call to mind an atom of the thing, that I wanted so much to recollect; though I knew, that it was something very simple, and most easy, and such as I could manage at almost any moment—just the very thing, in fact which alone was needed, to restore my early powers, and perhaps to place them, in some measure, under my own command. After cudgelling my slow brain to no purpose, I resolved to take the bull by the horns, and do no less, than go, and see Professor Brachipod himself.

On the brink of an enterprise so perilous, duty alike to my friends, and self, demanded all possible precaution. The first thing I did was to tell Uncle Bill—for I feared to let my mother know—whither he should send for my remains, if I did not come home by dinner-time. Also I took a most trusty friend, to walk up and down, on the opposite side of the street, and listen keenly for any squeal, at all like vivisection. Also, I had a great mind to buy an American revolver, but felt ashamed of such a relapse into savagedom, and was satisfied with a bit of English oak; such as my quickness of turn might avail with, against a robustness above my own. So with *Grip* at my heels, I rang the bell.

The Professor was at home, and in answer to my card, sent a nice young lady, of Brachipod race, to say that he was just in the crisis of a very important experiment, but would come to me in a few minutes, if I could kindly wait so long.

"I am afraid we must hardly let that fine dog in;" she said, with a pleasant smile, which made me feel ashamed. "I am very fond of them; but dear papa is a little nervous now; he has not been well lately."

"I hope you will pardon me for bringing him," I answered, "but he is very old, and a walk is such a treat to him. May I put him in some outhouse? He is as quiet as a lamb. Oh, thank you; that will do beautifully. I hope, I

am not interrupting the Professor; his time, of course, is so valuable."

Presently he came down; and I was thoroughly ashamed of my own alarm. Instead of the Brachipod, who used to jump, and gesticulate, and poke knuckles into me, I beheld an infirm, and disabled old man, who was killing himself prematurely, by wanting to know too much about it. His face was melancholy, and almost pitiful, as if from perpetual disappointment; his forehead was channeled with a chart of hopeless soundings; and even the vivacity of his eyes was sad.

"I am very glad to see you," he said kindly, and gazing with a little sigh at me. "I remember you well. But how much you are grown! I fear we used to frighten you, in the days gone by. We took the wrong course altogether. If we had only been gentle, and patient, we might have done much with your singular case, and learned things of very deep interest. It was bad luck. There were too many of us, and the spirit of rivalry spoiled everything. I should have kept you to myself, as I had every right to do. But poor Jargoon, and unhappy Chocolous—you have heard what a sad loss all Science has sustained? Have you not? They have both fallen victims to the spirit of research. I ought not to grieve for them; for there can be no nobler termination to a scientific life. Jargoon, as you know, had a doltish theory—though I should not call it that, when he cannot contradict me—about the universal action on all organisms, of what he called gaseous expansion. He made a great discovery, as he believed, of a primary element, 'Proto-hylic Nephelin,'—intensely inflammable in combination. He was trying its effects upon the human system, by inhalation through a straw; when unhappily Mrs. Jargoon struck a match, to seal an important letter. In a moment, the Professor, and his theories were abolished; so exhaustively, that they could hold the inquest, upon nothing but the calcination of his left glass-eye."

"I never heard anything more shocking," I exclaimed, forgetting all the evil, in the sadness of his end, and admiring the courage of the great discoverer. "And poor Professor Chocolous—was he abolished too?"

"Not so entirely; but perhaps more sadly. You know that by his theory—a perfectly absurd one—all causation was referred to the agency of bacilli—*bacteria* we used to call them, but the other word is the more correct. Moreover, he was indulging in a life-long hope, to establish, in his own person, the one thing which alone convinces the multitude,—ocular proof (as the outsiders term it) that the human race has lost its noblest, and far more essential member than the head is—in a word, its tail, by assuming an attitude never contemplated, in the scientific stages of evolution. A learned American has, in my opinion, cut the ground from under the feet of Chocolous, by showing that the caudal loss results from the abandonment of the quadrumanous life; and that the only chance of recovery lies in the resignation, not of chair, but house, and the reinstitution of arboreal habitude. But, to pretermit his theories, (which appear to me weak and outrageous) his end, before even the nucleolus of a tail was established, is a most melancholy tale. The very day after he had inoculated his dextral ulna with a new bacillus (discovered in the windpipe of a duck) he received,—as the rule is with learned Germans, and the exception with learned Englishmen,—a most flattering invitation —which is in fact a command—to present himself in very high quarters. You may suppose, what a fuss he was in—for few of those foreigners have much self-respect—to put himself into his very best clothes, and to have all his theories ready in his hat. I suppose, that he would not be allowed to carry that, but I have never had the opportunity of learning."

"Surely, sir," I said, "with all your fame, and all the immense things, that you have discovered——"

"No, Tommy, no!" he replied, with much meekness; "but my scientific status is none the worse for that. However, Herr Chocolous, the distinguished German, was happy to be thought worth looking at; and he prepared himself well, in every point but one. He should have provided himself with cross-trees, or guttapercha buffers, ever so small, just to take his bearing. 'What will you do, if you have to sit down?' I asked him, with some prescience of the woe in store for him. 'Bosh!' was his answer, for he loved that word, 'zey vill never ask a poor man, like me, to seet!'

'Well, I dare say not,' I replied, having never found any occasion to understand such things; and off he went, standing up in a Hansom, and looking more like Punch, than a man of any science.

"About a fortnight afterwards, I was sent for, not to Court; oh no, no fear of that for an Englishman!—but to the death-bed of our poor Chocolous; for whom I had always entertained sincere affection and profound respect. I found him as lively as ever, and jumping, to show me how his theories had been established. There was no Mrs. Chocolous, as perhaps you know; and nobody to care for him, except the maid-of-all-work. But she was crying dreadfully; and he was proving to her some new and unsustainable theory of bacilli.

"'I vill be dead,' he cried, 'zis time to-morrow. For vy? For because my teory is ze true one. Both of zem, both of zem, proved in one second! Prachibot, if you leeve, tree tousand year, never you vill have sush triomp!'

"Of course I could not contradict him then; but as soon as I came to hear all about it, the only thing proved was the soundness of my advice. For it seems, that as soon as he had been introduced, and received most graciously; another great German appeared, of even superior eminence in another line. And our poor friend Chocolous was kindly asked to sit. He pretended not to hear, and made a very fine retreat, with a deep bow, and one heel going back behind the other. But not even so, could he back out. Very nicely, but firmly, was he told, (in total ignorance of all his magnificent theories) to sit down; which is not supposed to be the proper thing, in such a presence. The chairs were rather large, and had a very slippery covering, being at the same time hard, and bright. Nothing could be worse for a man to sit upon, who was cherishing hopes of inaugurating the recovery of our lost member.

"What could he do? He could neither sit down, nor by any means refuse to do so; the third course (as a great master of shuffling puts it) was to sit, and yet not to sit. And this the poor Professor was obliged to do, in a posture of cardinal adversity. He brought his *scapulæ* to bear against the

back of the chair, which was upright; then he super-posed, but not imposed, the sessile portion of his organisation; supporting his weight by his right wrist entirely, and maintaining non-contact in the critical quarters with the unscientific institution. This was most skilfully managed; as only a man deeply grounded in organisation could have organised it; and but for one little point, all had been well. This point was the simultaneity, of the great bacillar experiment, with the peril to caudal aspirations. Between two stools, or rather I should say, between the ulnar and the lumbar difficulty, Science lost one of her very brightest stars. The ligatures, skilfully placed to confine the experiment to a safe area, gave way, beneath the whole burden of a well-fed frame. The issue need not be described, although most deeply interesting. Mortification ensued; and our friend, acknowledged to be foremost in a most important study, left nothing but his papers, which I am now preparing, with the aid of Mullicles, for publication."

"What a sad case!" I could not help exclaiming; "really it seems, as if Science destroyed all her great admirers, as the female spider does; in addition to all the poor flies of the public. I do hope, Professor, that you will take care of yourself."

"There is no fear for me, because all my theories are sound," he replied, with a sweet smile of certainty; "but I have great misgivings about Mullicles. Histic fluxion, as he calls it, is his craze; and he pushes his experiments beyond the bounds of prudence. I am sure that it must be a great blow to you, to have heard, that of the four learned men, who desired to promote your interests in early life, two alone are left, for the study of your case. You are come to me, I doubt not, because you have discovered, with the aid of Professor Megalow (from whom I have heard of you, more than once, as a very promising acolyte) that my theory about you was the true one. I would only request you to be candid with me."

I was touched by his diffidence, and gladly told him everything; how the death of my dear father had entirely deprived me of all my early buoyancy through sudden exultation; and how, instead of that, my only tendency to rise was apparently created now by wrath, and sense of wrong. But even this, I told him, was a rare case now; especially as I had done my utmost to repress it. Then I added, that I wished, for reasons which I need not mention, to recover my peculiar gift, but keep it under my own control.

"I can promise you all but that last," he replied; "and that you can only secure, by returning to your former system of artificial weights. See how exactly everything has verified my diagnosis! 'Organic levigation' was the term I used, as if by a happy insight; and no better explanation can be rendered now. My dear young friend, you must place yourself entirely under my directions. But unhappily, I cannot undertake the matter *gratis*; though my ardour for Science would induce me so to do, if my circumstances were as they ought to be. You are well aware of the disgraceful fact, that in England there is no State-subvention for the highest of all purposes—scientific research. We spend all our substance, and our brains, without emolument, or honour; while those who make improvements in some trumpery handicraft, or poison the public by pure quackery, obtain position, and title, and large fortunes."

"But not the fame!" I answered with my usual politeness; and he smiled, and his pale, worn eyes glistened, through his double glasses.

Then I asked what his terms would be; and found them so moderate, that I doubled them; as was only fair to his high repute. But he made me pledge my honour to one thing—that during his lifetime I would not divulge his method, if it proved successful. I am happy to say that he still is living, and of very great renown, and good position; so that my promise remains still in force.

CHAPTER XXXV.
NATIONAL EMERGENCY.

Everything seemed to go well with me now, except for one sad visitation —the loss of my dear Uncle William. He, by his brave resignation, and patience, childlike simplicity, and wonderful yarns, as well as pipes, and grog, and quids—whenever he could get them—had endeared himself greatly, in a few days, not only to me, but to all at the Bower. Even *Grip* went to see him, and took such a fancy to him, that he would sit with his chin in the wasted brown hand, and look at him sorrowfully by the hour; as if they were two poor old broken chaps together. And the night Uncle Bill died, *Grip* never stopped howling; and he went about the place, and scarcely ate a bit of victuals, until he had attended the funeral.

But Uncle Bill's death, though very sad to us, was painless, and placid, and happy to himself. He had said, that he should like to see the chaplain; and accordingly Mr. Cope came in. We left them to themselves, and there was not much said; only they had a little prayer together; and Mr. Cope asked him if he had any doubts, and he said "None whatever." In the morning, he was passed beyond all doubts; and I, who sat up with him, cannot say exactly the hour, when his Angel came for him.

He always felt faith in the Lord, all his life; and though he may not have lived up to it, surely his last end was better than that of a man who endeavours to outstrip the Devil, by growing a tail to frighten him.

One thing surprised me about Uncle Bill, as soon as I had spirit to think of it; and that was—why had he never said a word about *Jumbilug's* eyes, to my mother, or myself, when he knew that his last time for business was come? I had even gone so far as to ask him, (when Dr. Flebotham pronounced his own task accomplished) whether he would like me to bring them in, and show them; or whether there was anything he wished to say about them. But he put his pipe-stem to his lips—for he was

allowed to do anything now, that would make his last hours tranquil—and he tried to shake his head, as if to say—"all that is settled." And the only provision he made for death, (as regards this world, and its dealings) was to have his favourite pipe buried with him, and a quarter of a pound of bird's-eye, and a box of the "Bottom of the Atlantic Matches," which nothing can prevent from striking. For he had been among savage tribes so much, that all this became orthodox on his part.

Whether he was lawyer enough to know—for sailors do pick up queer things—that he saved the family £4,500, by this behaviour; or whether it was only that he would not now disturb himself, and did not wish to be reminded of the only stars, that living people care for; or whether he would not confuse his last pipe; at any rate, in the most decisive manner, he conveyed to me, that he would have no more said about *Jumbilug's* eyes—which he would have condemned, at any less momentous moment—but all was to be, as he had once for all directed. This made me feel a certain sense of trusteeship; as if I were placed in full charge of these stones, and must most exactly do, whatever he had ordered.

But when I was told, for the first time, of their value, I found it very hard to trust my ears. Such a great injustice did it seem to me, (who have an ardent love of fairness) that the cleverest man in the world might work, for sixty years—the entire parenthesis of anybody's meaning here—without earning half of the value of one of the eyes of a barbarous idol.

For the great jewel-merchant in Hatton Garden, to whom Sir Roland took me, could scarcely believe his own eyes at first—the day being of London texture—until he put on a strong jet of light (reflected by white mirrors) and took a double magnifier, and went into the very bottom of both stones. Even then, he was almost afraid of his own judgment, and looked at us doubtfully, and shook his head, and even the hand that held such treasures.

"If I did not know you to be Sir Roland Twentifold, and this young gentleman to be a friend of yours, and therefore above all suspicion, it would be my duty to call in the police, and place these in their charge,"

he said; "as the produce of some tremendous robbery. I have been in the trade, for more than forty years, and Crown jewels, and those of the great R—— family have passed through my hands; but until now, never such a pair of blue diamonds as these are. They must be well known; they must have a great history. I know all the leading gems of Europe; but these are entirely new to me. Is there any reason, why I should not know the story?"

"None whatever," I replied, "if you will receive it first in confidence. And then if you think that my right to them is perfect, I care not how the story spreads."

I told him all I knew; while he listened with deep interest, and so did Sir Roland, who had not heard all till then. I insisted especially upon Uncle William's character, and his great superiority to piracy, or rapine; and enforced the fact that he had not run away with that idol, with any view to its value, but simply as a deed of justice, against a most horrible tribe of cannibals, who had eaten as much as seventeen white men, and had vowed the sole survivor as a sacrifice, to the image with these resplendent eyes. The jeweller's sympathies went warmly with me, and with Uncle Bill in his operations; but he could not help sighing, and I asked him why.

"Because I never had such a chance myself;" he answered, with a candid smile. "And to think of your luck, in escaping all duty! Your Uncle? Why, let me see—three per cent. They could not have been valued for probate, or administration, at less than £150,000; and probably I should have had to appraise them. Since the disappearance of the French blue diamond, there is nothing in that line to come near them. Each of them is worth at least two Hope's; that is, if they cut, as I am sure they will."

"But is there not some ground to fear," I asked, "that when all the facts become known, our Government might insist upon restoring them? They seem to exist for the purpose of surrendering every British right, whether public, or private."

"Undoubtedly they do," he answered sadly; "but your very clever Uncle has provided against that. You can make oath, with clear conscience, that you do not know the name of the place they came from; and if they were there three hundred years, how can they be traced from Borneo? No, you need not have the smallest apprehension about that. They belong to you as absolutely, as the watch now in your pocket. And I congratulate you warmly, upon such a grand possession."

Then I asked him, with some diffidence, what the fee for his opinion was. But he said, "None. Only when you have them cut, I should like it to be done through our house, if you think fit. We are proud to say now that such work can be done in London, as well, or even better than in Amsterdam. It is a new industry, and deserves to be encouraged. And to make a good job of such gems as those, would give a fine impetus to the English art."

This I promised gladly; and after some kind words of caution from him, and of good advice from Roly—who never left anything unhandled—we took a cab direct to "Placid Bower," feeling as important, I do believe, as any two young men in all London.

In the presence of Sir Roland, who dined with us that day, I handed to my mother that one of the two stones, which the jeweller had pointed out, as rather the more precious. But she was so amazed, when we had told her all the story, that it was quite impossible to refrain from laughing.

"You expect me to believe a single word of that!" she cried, having scant faith in youthful verity. "No, no, Master Tommy, I was born before you were. And what would your dear father have said, to hear such things! Your poor Uncle William was a man of such a nature, that if he had twelve pockets, there were twenty-four holes in them. He would have told me, of course, not you; if he had thought them worth speaking of. He had daily opportunity of testing my discretion. Put them under your

pillow, Tommy, and don't let me hear any more of them." And she marched away, leaving her blue diamond contemptuously, in the fingerglass.

"Take her at her word, you millionaire of a Tommy;" Sir Roland said to me, when he had shut the door.

And at first I was so touchy, that I felt inclined to do so. But better sense prevailed; and on the following day, I left both the jewels at our banker's, (one in my mother's name, and the other in my own) locked up in a box, with other valuables. And this was a great weight off my mind; and I said to myself, as I came away, "My blue eye shall never see the light again; unless it is to please a pair of lustrous brown ones, a million times more beautiful than any jewel ever seen. But, alas, I shall never have such luck as that!"

Before I had time to fetch many sighs about it, or even to be certain that I need sigh at all, (for Hope has a liking for my heart, because she finds herself so well treated there) behold, there came to pass a thing, that drove me to the very place, whither I was longing for to go.

"This very day," Sir Roland cried, as he jumped off his horse, and left *Grip* to mind him, "this very day, Mrs. Upmore, if you please, you must send your dear son down to Larkmount-on-the-hill. The powers of evil are conspiring against him; and nothing but his lovely face, and hair, and the way he lets the sunshine come under his heels, will scatter the devices of the democrats. Now, you hate all democracy; you know you do."

"As far as I understand the nature of it, Sir Roland," said my mother, who was proud of accuracy, "I am not much for it, as a question of degree. They sweep away all degrees, or try to do so. And how can Tommy ever be an M.A. then?"

"You are right—too right I am sorry to say;" Sir Roland replied quite gravely, for he always agreed most warmly with ladies, and by so doing generally converted them; "better had he not attempt to be an M.A., with

the present Government in power. He will be exposed to the most fearful risk. If the measures now proposed are passed next year, there are very solid grounds for believing that a bonfire will be made of M.A.'s upon Hampstead Heath, to celebrate the Democratic triumph. You saw the Martyr's Memorial at Oxford, when you went to see what Tommy was up to once?"

"Oh yes, Sir Roland, all cut into small ribs, not as if they had caught fire at all, but as clean as the three Holy Children. But what I thought most of, was the College halls, and kitchens, and the places with a sliding shutter, where the butter is buttery, and no best Dorset."

"Not in vain is it that ladies have such powers of observation. But how would you like to see all that swept away, and instead of it, Board-schools, dissenting chapels, co-operative stores, and social science institutes? And unless you send Tommy down with me to Larkmount, that is all we shall have to look forward to. He alone can save the Country, from the vast deluge of anarchy now pouring in."

"Well, I do feel it hard upon me," dear mother answered, "to be losing him again; almost before he has had time to get into gray mourning for his uncle. But his dear father's foremost principle was,—and he was putting by money, to support it—that Tommy should go into Parliament, and speak up courageously for the boiling interest. It is useless to hope that Jack Windsor could do it, even if there were no other children; he can count sixpennyworth of halfpence; but if you ask him why, he stares at you. But Tommy is always as pat with an answer, as a Cheap-jack, or a Prime-minister; and sometimes more than he should say to the mother, that brought him up, and fermented him. And now it seems a Providence, Sir Roland, to speak without offence to any one, that he should be M.A. and M.P., without paying anything at all expensive; and make the one defend the other, against the people his dear father could never put up with, though many times they promised him their custom."

"And never gave it, I'll answer for that," Sir Roland replied most truly. "Tommy, you have heard what your kind mother says; and I hope you will carry out her principles; all of which are of the very highest order."

This settled everything; and next day, my dear mother packed me up, without more than one tear on the top of my shirts, about which she was most particular. But she looked at me very hard, when she had finished; and said—

"Why, mercy on me, child, what a fidget you have become, about your clothes! When you used to go to Oxford, the trouble always was, to get you to look twice into your chest of drawers. But now, one would think, that your own mother knew nothing about what is fit for you to wear! There is something going on down there, I do believe, that you don't think fit to trust me with. I have always understood that those voters of the public are very crafty people, to have to deal with. And they make you promise almost anything they like. Now, don't you go, and promise to marry any of their daughters, without consulting me about it. You are a great catch now, and entitled to look high. Now, bear my words in mind, although I see that you don't mean to tell me anything. You are just like your father, when it comes to that."

For I felt, that I had no right to tell her a word about Laura Twentifold, until I knew more; and it would have been more than I could bear to have the matter lightly spoken of, and constantly referred to, as a common love-affair; while to me it was so deep, and sacred. And I knew, that she would hurry off at once to Mrs. Windsor, and perhaps Mrs. Chumps, to have a good talk over it; which would have been to me a dreadful profanation. So I made her mind comfortable, and then departed.

CHAPTER XXXVI.
VOTE FOR TOMMY!

It was indeed high time for me to be stirring, if I meant to be returned for Larkmount; about which I cared supremely little, except as a stepping-stone, towards my true love, and ambition. For, although the influence of the Towers should have been paramount in the borough, as a matter of right and long usage, the times were become so perverted that a brisk opposition was got up; and some Liberal orators had been brought down, who had nothing whatever to do with the place, and cared not a farthing for its interests. My competitor was the owner of a paper-mill, out of which he had made a good lump of money; and he announced his intention to spend it freely, for the national good—as he presumed to say. As yet, I had only paid a single visit to the enlightened electors, and their wives; whereas Mr. Squelch had been working hard for months, with his agents, committees, and "organisation" of every kind, in full activity. But Sir Roland was as confident, as ever he could be, and made light of the enemy's start in advance.

"They don't understand human nature," he said; "all their promises will have got stale, and insipid, and all their bolts of clap-trap will have been shot. In fact they will have bored the poor electors so, that we shall be a welcome novelty. We shall have all the ladies on our side, of course; and in these days of ballot, that is everything. An elector may promise as much as he pleases; but he dare not tell a lie about his vote, to his wife."

Also concerning my infinitely higher, and a thousandfold dearer ambition, it was high time for me to be doing my best; and I grew hot and cold, when I thought of it. Hot, when I heard from Sir Roland—who took the pleasure of a cannibal in telling me, while I could only reply, "Oh yes," "To be sure," "Very nice," and such like inanities, because of the compact between us,—how my Lord This, and Sir Somebody That,

had been staying at the Towers, and were most agreeable, and had shot very fairly, and had admired the neighbourhood, (discharging far too well, I feared, that duty towards their neighbour) and had promised most readily to come again, for the hunting, and the woodcocks, in November.

And cold I became, (quite as cold as a boy, who wants to have his bed warmed, and a treacle-posset, and his head wrapped up in a blanket) whenever I fell back upon my own poor chances, and knew that I must put them to the trial very soon.

This was quite certain to require all my skill, as well as a great deal of good luck at the moment. And one piece of fortune befriended me; to wit, that none of those owners of the earth were there, at the time of my arrival. Two were to come, in about ten days' time; but I hoped to get on a good bit before that, and talk of them as strangers, by the time they came. For ladies in the country, who have not been spoiled in London, like the faces they are accustomed to.

But in spite of all that, my hopes were low; not only because of my commercial birth, and want of high style, and of dashing disdain, and a dozen other lofty attributes; but also because of my natural deficiency in crass weight, and stolid material.

Somebody might say to the most perfect of all created beings, somebody perhaps, with a foot like a duck, and a back like the bole of a Churchyard yew,—"Well, if I did have a husband at all, I should like one to make a mark, when the ground is wet; I should like one, who could come round a corner safely, without looking for a church-tower, to see what way the wind is. Ah, I see how he manages so well down here—because you've got such a lot of weathercocks! Miss Twentifold, what would you say to yourself, for slighting good solid Englishmen, if your bridegroom made it a honey-moon indeed, by soaring to the moon, and leaving you to weigh the honey?"

Truly, there are people who would say all that; however far beyond their own business it might be. But would they have the chance of saying it? If so, they would be welcome; for the right word would be mine—the word that was worth all the world, and its works.

While I was entering into these thoughts, on the road from the Station to Twentifold Towers, Sir Roland was preparing a little device; in my opinion neither friendly, nor brotherly, nor even seemly. Having returned the day before, he sent a groom with a dog-cart, to bring me and my luggage from the Railway, according to the train agreed upon; and a pleasant drive it would have been, except for the troubles invading my heart. But just as we came to a little gate, opening into the grounds, about half a mile from the house, the man said to me,

"If you please, sir, would you mind taking the short cut here to the front? I have got a little job to do at the blacksmith's; and Sir Roland said, I had better not keep you waiting I shall be home with your traps, about a quarter of an hour after you."

I was rather glad to stretch my legs with a pleasant walk, on such a lovely afternoon; so I took my bit of oak, with which I had gone to encounter Professor Brachipod, and cheerfully entered on the footpath way. But when I had walked about a hundred yards, swinging my stick in defiance of dull care, and indulging in a song (which is a favourite of mine, because I have steered so many crews to triumph with it)—

"The flag that braves a thousand years,
The battle, and the breeze!"

Suddenly in a bosky dell, I stood face to face with Sir Roland, and his sister. Laura was amazed; and so was I. And Sir Roland maliciously kept his eyes intent upon his sister's face.

"Why, Tommy, what a nightingale you are!" he said. "We took a little stroll, for the chance of this meeting. Well done, old fellow! I am very glad to see you. I forgot to tell you, Laura, what a treat we might expect.

Why, you don't seem at all glad to see friend Tommy!"

"Mr. Upmore knows that I am always glad to see him;" the sweet voice, which always made me tremble, replied; as she put her hand in mine, and faced the sun, with a lovelier blush than he can kindle in the west; "but I did not in the least expect to see him; and in these lonely places, one is taken by surprise."

"I should think so indeed!" I exclaimed, with a glance of great indignation at her brother, who was smiling, as calmly as if he had done nothing; "but Sir Roland thought, doubtless, that it was not worth while, to speak of a visitor so insignificant."

"I am sure it was not that," she answered softly; "but he is now so full of politics, that we must excuse him everything. For an hour, I have had to listen to nothing but a lecture upon the Constitution. Oh, I do think the trees are so much more glorious, than the poor little men who cut them down!"

This was uncommonly clever on her part; for it set her brother off upon his favourite tirade, which he never missed a chance of delivering. And so we walked into the avenue, pretending to listen with the deepest interest; while I only knew that at my side was Laura; and she, to make up for the slight put upon me, gave many kind glances, and one or two delicious smiles.

"To-morrow, remember, no waste of time, to-morrow!" her brother said firmly, as soon as he had got to the bottom of the very deep vials of his wrath, by which time we were at the door almost; "no spooning about trees, or the beauties of nature, or any other beauties,—but good solid work. We shall breakfast early, and have a long day at it. I shall drive you to the "*True-Blue Hotel*" myself, and take with me a fellow, who has a brother at the paper-mills, I have a grand trick against old Squelch, in the bottom of my turbid heart, as some ancient writer calls it."

"You seem to be getting very fond of tricks;" cried his sister, as she ran away, to dress for dinner; "perhaps some will be played upon you, before long."

Such was my state now of mind, heart, and soul—as well as of body, which had long been in training for a great constitutional effort—that the paper-mill-man might have passed through his mill, as waste paper, the promises made him. Sir Roland had eight or nine carriages sent from the Towers, of three generations, including some now in use for cock-lofts; and we took all the children of Larkmount, in batches, for a drive, with their pinnies full of sugar-plums. There was nothing in the Bribery Acts as yet, to make such a proceeding penal; though now, if a candidate takes a fly out of the eye of a child, he is bound to ask firmly—"My dear, is your father an elector? Oh, then, I must put that fly back into your eye; or else my election will be null and void."

But the way these children enjoyed their drives, in a carriage with two horses—for none of them had less—and a big coat of arms, and a hand sticking up; and the way they drummed their feet, and holloaed—"Vote for Tommy! Down with Squelch!

> "Down with the paper-man, brown and old!
> Up with young Tommy, all curls and gold!"

—it was indeed a day to make one proud of the British Constitution.

"We'll do it again. We'll do it three times; if you are all good true-blue children;" Sir Roland said to the biggest-voiced ones, when the horses had made a good day of it; "blue jackets for the boys, and for the pretty girls blue bonnets, or hats, if they stand to their principles. But no yellow, mind you; touch no dirty yellow. Yellow fever, and jaundice for you, if you do. You shall all have the Gee-gees, to go and vote for Tommy."

> "Vote for Tommy! All curls and gold!"

We heard the clear voices from the hill in chorus, for half a mile, or more, of our homeward road.

Elated as I was, by this triumph of pure principles, and display of unselfish innocence, all I kept asking myself was this—"Will a body, worth the Constituency piled on the top of the Constitution, and the Kingdom on the top of the Continent, ever be persuaded to 'vote for Tommy?' I must know my fate. I can't go on, like this. To-night I shall have to carry on again, as if all I cared about was piano and back-gammon; and tobacco and billiards, afterwards. Roly is full of resources; but I seem somehow to have lost the very simplest move of tactics! Where are all my wits gone? I am only fit to be in the Government."

But if my wits stood me in no stead, Luck (which is a very far higher power, coming immediate from Heaven), she—for beyond any doubt she is female, like the Angels—down she came, and stood at my right hand, and ordered me to listen, while she did my work for me.

"Roly," Lady Twentifold said, when I had sung my song about the flag, which was now become a plague; "he has done a very hard day's work to-day, and he is not made of iron as you are. To-morrow, he shall have a whole holiday, with me and Laura, at Crowton and Sunny Bay. You have got business at Ipswich, I know, and will not be back till dinner-time. But if Tommy will not find it dull to come with us, and the day is as fine as to-day has been, we will go and see Sunny Bay—such a pretty place!—and look for shells, and sharks' teeth, and carnelians. Unless you would rather go practising, Tommy, with the keeper, before they come shooting again? There are plenty of pheasants, in some places, still."

"No; he had better go with you;" Sir Roland answered for me, as he loved to do. "The fates have been against Tommy's shooting so far. He has only been out with me twice at the rabbits, back in the summer; but I find thee apt; and duller should'st thou be than the fat cigar, Tommy—none shall teach thy young idea how to shoot, but I. Go thou with the mother, and play at periwinkles, and sand-hoppers, and cowries; an thou wilt."

CHAPTER XXXVII.
SUNNY BAY.

In all the wide world, there are lovelier bays than any to be found upon our eastern coast. But people, whose happiness is only comparative, may hie them away to superlative places, of Italy, or of the Cannibal Islands.

But for me, there is no place that need be more lovely, than Sunny Bay, when there is no sun upon it; except what goes out from the shore into the sea. A bay in the west takes an unfair advantage—it looks at its best, when the world is looking at it. While nobody gets up to see the best time of an easterly bay; or even if he does, he has nobody to admire it with him. And what use to admire a thing, by oneself?

Yet anything, fit to be called a bay, is so rare upon the weary stretch of coast, that it must not be looked in the mouth too closely, nor measured by the red tape of Government survey. If only it have a fairly carven curve, and two definite points not too far apart, a bay it is to be thankful for; and one to be proud of, and rejoice in, if there are hills and trees around it.

Sunny Bay had all of these; and as we drove down the Crowton lane towards it, I thought I had never seen anything so beautiful, the sea being gentle, and the sky clear and sweet. Lady Twentifold was pleased with my delight; for many of her visitors made very little of it.

"It is the prettiest place upon the eastern coast; at least in my humble opinion," she said, "though I do not pretend to be much of a judge. Roly makes light of it, after all his travels. But to me the familiar places are the sweetest; when we think of dear friends, who have seen them with us."

I looked at her eyes, still as beautiful as ever, and full of the warm home-love, which gives soft beauty to the simplest things.

"Laura is like her!" I said to myself; "Laura is like her. What more can be wished; except to share so sweet a heart?"

But the first thing to do was to share the dinner, or luncheon perhaps is the stricter word, if strict words are needful in a matter where none was. The carriage was sent away to the Inn at Crowton; for no house here intruded upon the pleasant meeting of land and sea. The rocks were just of the proper height, for table, chairs, and footstools, with bright green fringes, here and there, and mossy banks above the tide, and a crystal rill for the weaker vessels, and white sand for dainty feet to tap. To me it appeared, that all was perfect; except my clumsy self, with hands that trembled, and a heart that beat too fast.

"You are not well, my dear!" Lady Twentifold exclaimed, for she often addressed me kindly thus, when strangers were not present; chiefly perhaps from my fancied likeness to the dear child she had lost. "That canvassing has been too much for you. You are not intended for public life. I wish Roly would not force you into it so. Now, candidly, which do you enjoy the most; such a day as yesterday, or a day like this?"

With perfect truth, I answered—"Oh, such a day as this, a million times! But, I am as well as I can be, and wonderfully happy, I assure you. May I come, and look for shells with you?"

"To be sure you may. But don't forget your promise to my loves of burrow-ducks. You had better begin, before the tide comes up. Here are the flat trowel, and the long flag basket. Mind, the least touch brings them off, if you take them by surprise. But if you let them know that you want them, they won't come, without being knocked to pieces. My little dears were taken from their nest near here. And the scenery they prefer to everything, is limpets. Now, Laura, if you mean to try another sketch, I think this corner of the rocks, will be the best place for you, according to the way the light falls now. Tommy will follow me, I dare say; as soon as he has done his duty to the little ducks."

This arrangement was not quite the one I should have made, if the ordering had been left to me. Greatly as I admired, and loved "my dear lady," I certainly should have sent her shell-hunting; while I stayed in the corner, where the light fell so nicely, to offer to the nascent work of art the only criticism that ever is judicious—downright, thick-and-thin, admiration. However, not being the marshal of the forces, I made off, with tremendous zeal, to get a stock of limpets.

But, whether the tide was coming in too fast; or whether it was going out, at a pace to make one anxious about the welfare of the sea; or whether the limpets took to jumping, like sand-hoppers, carrying their rocks along with them; or whether there was no strange phenomenon at all, save the one that is strangest yet surest of all—the result, (which I am not in a position to explain, even if it concerned any salaried tide-waiter) was to fetch me very suddenly back to that corner; with the loves of the burrow-ducks left to woo the waves.

My own love was gazing, and, as I hoped, dreaming, about something that her pencil could not trace. That little reed of so many whispers, with the secret of Midas inside it, was lying on her block; and the only line it made, was its one true production—its own shadow. But who, that ever moved it, and made it far more eloquent than any poet's tongue, could have granted to it the expression of the face, now leaning over it?

What sympathy have rocks? Ever since they first began, the chief object of their life has been to knock human beings (generally on the shins, and knees) and to petrify them in a cave, at every opportunity, and to keep them from getting away from the sea, when the poor pulse is being beaten out of them. Typical are they of all that is stubborn, rugged, and relentless; and now one of them fetched me a knock on the knee (while my presence of mind was with Laura) that sent me down into a gulley of sand, with my limpet-trowel running into me. This was a pointed steel implement, such as bricklayers use; and my escape was narrow. A heavy man must have had a very heavy wound, and perhaps a fatal one; for the handle of the trowel struck the ground before me, while the steel was

pointing at my breast. But Nature has allowed me some compensation for the short weight unfairly served out to me,—especially quickness of eye, and of body. In a word, what there is of me is good stuff—though not much to boast of, as you will remind me.

"Oh, what a fearful thing! What a very dreadful thing! Darling Tommy, are you quite dead again? You are always doing it, for the good of others. Oh, put your poor head up, and let me look at you."

"That is not at all the right thing," I answered, after a groan or two, to ensure attention; "the proper thing is, for me to look at you. And that is how I got into all this trouble."

"How good of you, Tommy! How very good of you! But do let me see, where your dreadful wound is. I won't be afraid of it, I promise you I won't; because you got it all for my sake. You are always getting wounds, for my sake."

"Of course I am. And why?" As I put this question, I continued to lie in the pit of my fall; the position being very nice, with Laura added to it. "Because I am all wounds, and all dead, for you."

"Now, don't be so stupid;" she said, with one arm going under my side, in a spirit of inquiry, and the other coming very softly round my neck; to coax me to get up, if I could only find the power. "You know, that you never are stupid, unless you are stunned, or bewildered, through your dreadful heroism. Oh, do let me try to get this fearful thing from under you. I won't cut my hands; and if I do, what can it matter? Very likely, you are bleeding to death, all this time. Why don't you let me see, where your terrible wound is?"

"Because, I have only got a little scratch," I answered; "and I feel so very comfortable, as I am. If you could put your face the very least bit nearer ——"

"Do you think, you could lie quiet, while I go and fetch my mother? She has so much presence of mind, and she is——"

"How far away?" I asked in an earnest whisper.

"Oh, nearly a mile along the sands, I am afraid."

"Then I'll get up at once, if you will kindly try to help me. Only promise, that you won't be frightened by a little scratch, dear. It is nothing but the very smallest trifle, I assure you. I know one thing that would make it well at once. But there's no such luck for me as that. Both hands, darling —I may call you that now, mayn't I?"

"Just for the moment, while you are so sad, and helpless. Oh, but it is a very serious wound! Let me tie it up for you; it is bleeding quite fast. I know what to do for you. I'll put some laver to it."

The point of the steel had just gashed my chin—a narrow shave for me; as an inch or two lower would have sent it into my throat, no doubt.

"If you could hold the laver to it, while I run and fetch dear mother——"

"Not for the world. I want you, and you only. I love your dear mother very warmly, as you know. But oh, Laura, you can never know, how I love you!"

"You are taking an unfair advantage of me now;" she whispered, as she dropped her eyes, but not her hands; "I always thought, that you were so upright, and manly."

"So I am;" I answered, with my usual candour; "but I don't care how I sneak, or what I do; if I can only get you to be fond of me."

"What right have you to talk, with your chin in that condition? You will undo all the good my stupid hands can do you."

She raised her sweet eyes, to reproach me, as she spoke. And behold they were full of large bright tears!

I only said—"Darling, darling, darling!" each time, if possible, with greater fervour. And she answered, with a smile—"That is what I like to be."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.
PREPARE.

The Government of England never guides us long, without guiding itself into a fearful mess. The Tories, and the Radicals, are much alike in this; but they differ very widely in their way of getting out of it. The former resign, or appeal to the Country; which seldom responds to their chivalry. The latter jumble up, (instead of joining) issue; and jump into Jack-of-the-lantern vagaries, all over any bog, where nobody can shoot them.

This was the policy in practice now. Our foreign relations, being anything but friendly, were to be allowed to please themselves at our expense; while the gaze of the Country should be turned inward, and its hands employed in tearing their own vitality. Very grand measures were being prepared, for a fine subversion of established things; Liberal statesmen being quite convinced by their own condition, that the universe was wrong. Of all these projects the Country heard, with its usual self-complacence, growing more and more accustomed to be managed, and driven, by some half-dozen busybodies; according to the usage of democracies.

"We must make a stand somewhere," said sensible people; but left somebody else to make it. "I draw the line at this," or "I draw the line at that," declared the steadfast Briton; but if he drew it anywhere, it was only in the clouds. What could any single hand, or even a hundred stout men, with a hundred hands apiece, avail, when things were gone so far? The only man, who could extinguish the fire, was the very man blowing his large bellows at it; and in the headstrong weakness of his nature, he had shouted for a gentleman smaller than himself, but skilful in the manufacture of malignity.

So little desire had I, to share, in the rough affray impending, and so keenly did I feel my own helplessness, that nothing but Sir Roland's stern resolve could have held me to the pledge of public life. All I cared for was, to be allowed to take my Laura, who had promised to give herself to me; and it recked me very little how the public might be governed, if my home might boast so sweet a Queen. But, although Lady Twentifold had given her consent, and waived all obstacles of pride and birth, in the warmth of her good-will towards me, she made it a condition that we must secure the concurrence of her son, as the head of the family, and master of the race of Twentifold. And he (while as friendly to me as ever, and faithful to his promise not to interfere) sternly pronounced that he never would consent, until I had rendered some good service to the Country.

"How am I to do it?" I inquired, with sound reason. "Your condition amounts to a total forbiddance. I have no great abilities, as you are well aware. I shall never be an orator. I cannot even put ten big words together, without breaking down. To move the public ear now, the tongue must thunder forth a thousand thumping words, for every hollow tooth of meaning. And not only that, but a fellow must be able to work his words, so as to have two kinds of meaning—one for the public, and one for himself; when he finds it important to deny them. No, Roly, I shall never be distinguished. No honest man has any chance of that."

"How high can you go now, with a little indignation?" he asked, instead of answering me. "I know that you are practising; although you are so crafty, that no one has a bit of chance of seeing you. Why should you be shy of a power, so much rarer than the most entrancing eloquence? Prepare; you can never prepare too much. If I could only do what you can, Tommy, I would have a Dissolution in February, and be the Premier, after a very little practice. Why don't you let me know, how you get on?"

"Because you don't deserve it;" I answered with some spirit; and by this time he knew that I had some will of my own. "If you had said to me, about my darling Laura—'Tommy, you shall have her; and I trust to your own good feeling, not to leave a stone unturned, for the discomfiture of the Radicals'—you might have had me for your dog,—to sit up, or dance round the room, or jump over your handkerchief, at order. That would have been the wiser course for you to take."

I spoke with some emotion; and to my mind my words appeared altogether unanswerable. But he looked at me steadily, and his face expressed no sense of contrition. Neither did his answer.

"I considered all that; but I found it would be an entire mistake, so to trust you. Not from any doubt of your honour, my dear fellow, or desire to oblige me, after date. But simply because all your power would be gone. For a twelvemonth, after you have married Laura—supposing that such a thing ever comes to pass—there will be no possibility of stirring up any indignation in your system. She is so confoundedly sweet-tempered, that you (who have got too much of that already) doubling your stock—as married people do, at first—would regard the loss of India, or even a French invasion, with perfect equanimity; if they let you alone with your Laura. And without indignation, you have no wings now. I have taken the trouble to ascertain that point. And my settled conviction is, that after you are married, you will never fly again, until you have a good fight with Laura."

"What a very low, and coarse way you have of putting things!" I exclaimed with—as our Poets say—a mixture of emotions. Rapture, at the thought of ever having Laura; rage, at the base idea of ever falling out with her; and astonishment at Sir Roland's foresight, and grasp of the matter, in all its bearings. "Why, you look upon me, entirely as a subject for experiments!"

"Tommy," he made answer, with a smile so like my Laura's, (whenever she wanted to be funny) that his very worst sentiments might no more annoy me; "you are too fond of regarding things, from a narrow point of

view. Science possesses no interest for me. I take facts, as I find them. I care not a stiver why you fly. I find that you do so; and that is enough. Science would wander about for years, asking everything she met, to explain the reason. But sense is quite satisfied with the mere fact; and proceeds at once to make it useful. Professor Megalow, who knows everything (except the iniquities of the Rads) has told me repeatedly, that there has not been, for some centuries, any Englishman superior (even in his finest moments) to the power of gravitation; except a certain Thomas Upmore. Now, I care not, two skips of a flea, for the fact that there have been, and perhaps still are, some exceptions, among American aboriginals, to a law supposed to be universal. The British public cannot see those fellows; and probably has never heard of them. But the British public can see Tommy; and though capable no longer of amazement—after all it has been dragged through—it is capable still of a mild surprise, and of rubbing its eyes, and of trying to think. Our duty it is, to promote that effort—a sore, and a stiff one at first, no doubt, after five years of Liberal surrender of that right. One rare gift, if properly used, may restore the use of another. Thought in the national body is as rare, as flight in the individual. Restore the defunct power, my dear boy; or at least restore the desire for it, which alone must prove fatal to the Radicals. And then, but not till then, will I hail you as my brother, in the flesh, and in the spirit."

"It sounds very well, if I knew but how to do it," I answered with some kindly marvelling at the importance attached to me. "You make it a *sine quâ non* of brotherhood, in the humble being before you, '*ut patriæ sit idoneus, utilis agris*.'"

"Exactly. You could not have put it better. His country, and the agricultural interest—very nearly dead, and with which dies England; as her bitter enemies have long found out. I have no fear of you, when you once get in; which this Autumn Session will enable you to do. The writ will be issued next week, the vacancy having been declared already. Squelch has not a chance; and you shall take your seat formally, so as to be ready for the great fight in the Spring."

"But Chumps?" I asked; "when is Bill coming down? He will do you a great deal more good than I can. You seem to take it easily, about getting him in for Silverside."

"Because there is no chance of any opposition. Flanker will not resign until February. I have had a little talk with him, and made that square. The oddest part of all is, that I had the hardest work to get out my own warming-pan. The others have behaved like gentlemen. There will be six of us, with the three who still remain. All staunch fellows, and not a fool among them, unless it is your humble servant. Come, and have a game of pyramids, friend Tommy."

Very often, when I thought about Sir Roland Twentifold, I could not help feeling surprised at his devotion to that dryest and dullest of all games, at least in my opinion—politics. He was fond of field-sports, a bold rider, a good shot, a great lover of dogs, and of outdoor life, and a hater of town-existence. Yet all these were only light pleasures to him; while politics, and the strife of parties, seemed to be his passion. Handsome as he was, and a fine young man, with a rent-roll even finer, and therefore at a high demand in the London market, he passed among all the fair snares, uncaught, with a pleasant smile justly distributed.

I ventured to ask Lady Twentifold once, how she, (so free from prejudice, and so full of good-will to the world at large) could have brought up her son, with such set convictions, and principles, perfectly upright, but sometimes almost too unbending. She looked up, with a kind but rather melancholy smile, from the paper, on which she was making a pencil-sketch of a very grand oak-tree, still in its prime, but as rugged as a ruin.

"Who brought up this tree?" she asked.

"Nature does everything now," I replied; "it used to be the Lord; but it is Nature now. In a few years more, it will be Science. When we tire of that, it will be Accident. And after that, Something even nobler."

"But the tree will be the tree;" she answered gently, for her fear about me was that I might grow too scientific, if led into arguments against it; "I prefer to say, that the Almighty made it so, though few ladies now would agree with me. My dear Tommy, I have no more to do with the bent of Roly's mind, than I have with the twists, and turns, of this tree. He inherits it all from his grandfather; upon, I suppose, what the learned people call, the system of alternation. My dear husband, Roland's father, would never go near Westminster; although we had a house in London then, to see our friends in the season. He sat for Twentibury, in his own chair, or in the saddle, according to the season; and everything went on as nicely as could be. But his father had been of an uncomfortable nature, desiring to make speeches, and to meddle generally, his grandfather having been a strong Jacobite; and the whole of it comes out again in my Roly."

CHAPTER XXXIX.
FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE BENEFIT.

The alternate system, as Lady Twentifold called it, happily prevails in the national England, as well as in the domestic. When one batch of Statesmen has done a world of harm, and are getting skilful at it—as in three years, or four at the outside, they are sure to learn to be—a cry of "Turn them out" begins first in the gallery.

Then the people who pay more, look up, and soon become inclined to rap their sticks. Before long, a general demand arises, for the room rather than the company, of the individuals on the platform. If they are gentlemen, they make their bow, and retire, heartily wishing bad luck to their successors. But if they are—something that rhymes with Rads, they pretend to hear nought, till a stunning row arises; and then they do this, they call out—

"Policeman, let in all the public, who had got no tickets. They won't have seen any part of our performance; and therefore they can judge impartially."

This was the very thing going on just now. The Government had no leg left to stand on,—a very good reason for their not going out,—but sitting on the quarter, which had been well kicked (to keep Britannia's in countenance) they were doing what we little boys in Maiden Lane were clever at, (until the new system abstracted our material) that is to say, making go-cartfuls of dust, to blow through a pipe at the inquiring public.

Seven measures, of primary importance, had been promised; and hecatons of wise rogues had been sent round, to inoculate the public with an itch for home-dust, as a pleasant little change from the national mud-stains. And a flourish of trumpets had filled the air of England,

with a Krakatoa volume of that fine material, which contains the germs of everything. In the gracious speech from (their own cracks in) the Throne, Ministers solemnly informed the Country, that internal repairs were its urgent need, and the only way to make them was to pull it all in pieces, and double all the stuff, with the blessing of the Lord. The good old material had groaned at this; but what is the use of groaning, with the hatchet in the air?

The first need of all was to get rid of landowners. Land belongs to every one, and therefore to no one. Why have men got feet, except to plant them where they like? Nature has implanted in the human heart a profound desire for the ownership of land. This proves, that everybody must own land. But how, without kicking every other body out? Towards that, the first step is, to kick out present owners. When the others get in, they must be kicked out too. There is no other way to have it cultivated properly; but this will ensure a "succession of crops." A narrow-minded man may fight hard to keep his foot upon what he has spent his hands and mind in earning. But with a little patience, that evil will die out.

Nothing can be simpler than to provide, that after a certain date, no landowner shall be capable of prolonging his unjust tenure, by the suppeditation of heirs to his estate. No physical means will be taken to this end. He will still remain in full enjoyment of every British right, civil, moral, social, and politico-œconomical. But he must not have children; or if he dares to do so, the State will take them from him; and enlist them in the Army, at the usual age of British soldiers—sixteen. Or if they be girls, they will have a free passage to the Chiefs guaranteed to be ravaged by the Boers.

The second great measure was the Dust-bin franchise, or—at sufficient distance from London to ensure intelligence—that of the Dust-pan. A sanitary, not to say a necessary measure, appealing to every heart and hearth.

The third, (whose preamble was eloquence itself, to such an extent that it cannot be cited) enabled the surrender, without consideration, of all strong places, at present held by Her Majesty's forces, upon foreign soil, or soil which (without such British occupation) would be foreign to this realm. Also, of all British ships of war, whether built to pass over the waves, or beneath them, together with all fittings, and implements of war, (in proportions to be defined by the schedules thereafter) to the following Powers; that is to say, France, Russia, and the Irish Republic, heretofore better known as the Land-League.

The fourth Bill provided for the abolition of every Municipal Corporation, or other corporate, or incorporate, body of burgesses, or ancient freemen, making claim to deal with their own affairs, without licence from the Home Secretary, or the Local Government Board, or the Railway Station, that might be nearest. Unless such Municipal Body could show, that they had not been constituted for more than ten years, and consisted entirely of Liberals.

Short and sweet was the fifth Bill of Government. It had no preamble but this, "Whereas no Englishman knows how to govern himself," and then it enacted, that no man should play cards, chess, back-gammon, quoits, skittles, billiards, bagatelle, or any other game of chance, or skill, except in the presence of a certified policeman, at a distance of not less than half a mile from any Licensed Victualler, with no more than two sterling pence at stake; every such game to be discontinued, immediately upon the Home-Secretary's yawn, which would be announced throughout all English counties, by telephonic agency. But in Scotland, and Wales, and wherever else the Liberal cause was predominant, all people might play, whenever, wherever, and for whatsoever sum, they pleased.

Of the sixth Bill, the man of the greatest experience, and insight to be found, (at any cubeage of mileage from London, and all its stupidity) could not make head, or tail; though he sat up, until a policeman from the Home Department ordered him to bed. The only theory at all to be entertained about it, was that the gentleman, entrusted with the draft,

had taken another, to inspire him for his labours; or else had imbibed, too deeply perhaps, the spirit of his subject. It was all about Ireland, (from which the great St. Patrick expelled all the devils, on the herd of swine system,—except that they stopped at home, as well as swam the Channel) for nothing can ever convey, to the unmeasurable apogee of Radical brains, the wisdom of leaving unstirred Camerina. Since that party, by means of cold summers and hot ravings, stuck their heels into the Country's ribs, they had never allowed it to chew anything, but black wild oats of Ireland. Perish India, perish Colonies, perish England, perish everything, except savages who stab all kindness! And their last panacea was this great measure,—to govern Ireland, according to Irish ideas. "Whereas no Irishman obeys the laws, and thereby incurs, illegally, irrationally, and unjustly, the stigma of lawlessness; be it enacted, that after the passing of this Act, there shall be no laws in Ireland." With the aid of Hibernian Members, this Bill was certain to pass; and it could do no harm.

The seventh, and last, of the measures, upon which the Government staked its existence, (although they had fifty-two more, which they pledged themselves to carry, if shoved on much) was sensible, and simple, and consistent with all Legislation in that province. It merely prohibited the opening of flowers, whether under glass, or out of doors, after six o'clock p.m. Forasmuch as a scientific Member had assured the Licensed Anti-Victualler, that divers of them are guilty of intoxicating agency.

CHAPTER XL.
FAIR COUNSEL.

"Of all truths, the surest is the truth well established by the behaviour of Britons for many years now,—one man may steal a horse and canter away, with every hat (even the owner's) tossed up, in applause of the brilliant proceeding; while the same man's first cousin, (who peeped through the hedge, at the dew on grass, or the daisies) lies groaning in the stocks, and perhaps touches his hat to the luck, which rides over everything. If any other man, of any English era, from Heptarchy to Hecatarchy, (that last child of Hecate) had stolen from his happy mead, and lashed into foam, and thrown upon his knees, with his strong back broken, that fine old nag the British Constitution; after the horse he would have had the cart—which is not his own order of placing them—and the cart would have been the one that drives to Tyburn."

Thus said Sir Roland. But owning no land, and no sentiments (therewith transmitted, and tripled at every other generation) I scarcely knew who had been stealing the horse, and only hoped that the nag would come home again. For a horse is the most sacred of all property, infinitely dearer than house, wife, or child—according to the precedents of English law—and very likely he deserves it.

But what did I care about horses, or hedges, or the clever man who made the horse jump the hedge, (ready-saddled that he might steal him) or even the state of the British Constitution, which passes through so many horse-chanting hands? My convictions were solid, and their grounds of the same character; all grouted in with concrete, and pointed with best Portland cement, and not a bit of lime-blow anywhere, nor any sign of job-work to be found in them. Yet I am not ashamed to say,—because I shall secure all honest sympathies—that if my orders had been to make tea for the man who stole the horse, and a bran-mash and litter, for the

animal thus stolen, and to whistle to both of them, while they did their duties; the teapot, and the bucket, and the other necessaries, would not have been out of the reach of my arm.

But, why? As everybody has taken to ask now. "Why do you do this? And why don't you do that?" The last thing that any man should have to explain; because it leads him into a tremendous lot of lies. He has not the least idea, why he did a single one of them. But he can't say that; and he sets to with after-thoughts, like a man who builds his house of the chimney-pots.

In my case, however, there is no hard why. To the youngest, (or even the oldest) intelligence, the flexibility of my principles, (though granitic as above) needs no explanation, when I set before them Laura.

"Dear Tommy, don't be made a party man;" she said to me, just before Parliament met, and while I was holding a skein of floss-silk (which is difficult stuff to manage) that she might wind it for some lovely work.

"You are the party that makes me one;" I answered, with a sigh, to earn some gratitude; "can anybody question the purity of my motives, when he looks at you, dear?"

"I don't want compliments, instead of common sense, Tommy. Of politics I know next to nothing, although I hear so much every day. But all I hear is upon one side so much, that I cannot help thinking, what the other side may be; and sometimes I should like you to try it."

"Darling, have you any thought, that has not its image, and counterpart with me? Whatever passes through your most beautiful mind, at the very same moment comes through mine. Only yours is so very superior."

"No, Tommy, no. You must never say that, because I shall fear that you are laughing at me. Now, don't drop the silk—no, I don't look entrancing; and there was nothing whatever in the situation, to compel you to do it, or me to allow it. You keep on manufacturing excuses of that sort. And a rising Statesman should be above such conduct. Where was

I? You have quite deranged my thoughts. Oh, about the present state of the nation, to be sure! Roly is a great alarmist; but I cannot see any harm at all going on; and I do hate wars, and faction-fights. Why need you go up, to take your seat at all? My father was in Parliament continually; but he took care never to go near it."

"Neither would I, if I could help it, Laura. But the times are very different now. I have not the least chance, dear, of ever attaining what I long for most in all the world, except by going up; and more than that, doing something to satisfy your dear brother."

"Well, promise me one thing. Make beautiful speeches, (as you ought to do, after all your practice, in saying fine things to me every day) and so become a leader of great principles; but try not to be harsh with any one. It would spoil your nature, which is so sweet, and cheerful. Remember that the gentlemen, you disagree with, have a right to their own opinions, and a claim to be treated as gentlemen; instead of being abused—oh, in shocking language! Sometimes Roland makes me stare."

"He is very hot indeed," I could not help admitting, as I smiled at the horror on the sweet kind face. "But remember, dearest, that they give him reason; for they care very little what they say themselves. And much worse than that, is what they do; at least in his honest opinion. He believes them to be ruining his Country. Can a warm-hearted young man be expected to sprinkle rose-water on the destroyers of his Country?"

"That is the opposite extreme;" she insisted, with more common sense than could be gainsaid. "Surely he might express what he feels, in forcible language; without imputing bad motives, and all sorts of wickedness, to people who may be doing harm, but are not doing it on purpose. At any rate, Tommy,—though he is past cure, and soon puts me down, if I dare to say a word—I shall cease to believe, that you care for me, if I hear of your going on so."

Well, here was a cleft stick for me to be in! If I should fail to prove myself a red-hot Tory Sir Roland would have none of me. Whereas, if I won his good-will in that way, his sister would throw me over. Not that she put it so coarsely as that; but when a girl says, that she will not believe in a man's affection for her, it generally means that her own for him will be in still greater danger. My fortune is, always to get into scrapes; and my nature, to get out of them.

When I returned to "Placid Bower," as the elected of Larkmount-on-the-Hill, (for paper had not the least chance against soap) I found my dear mother in a state of much excitement, and ready to believe almost anything.

Now, why does excitement so multiply the powers of faith, when it ought to do the opposite? However, so it does; and the slaves of "pure reason" are as credulous as any, in their ardour for it.

But my dear mother, (though the kindest-hearted, and most liberal-minded of nearly all women) always considered it an insult, to have pure reason, in any form, applied to her. And right she was, when the premises were hers, and she had bought out even the Ground-landlord.

"Tommy," she said, "I am always most particular, in my expressions about the Government. Your father took some excellent Government contracts, through his heroism with the three-inch hose; otherwise how could we have bought this house? It is useless for you to talk, as if that Government was not the same as this one. That may be true; but it proves nothing. A Government must be the Government; and the Government it was, that paid us so much money. So that I will hear no complaints against them, for this trifle, or for that; because of all things, I have such a scorn for ingratitude. We may not like everything they do, about cards, and Policemen, and Railway Stations, and preventing my Evening Primroses, because of the great abilities of Lord Beaconsfield. But we must not be selfish, my dear son, nor expect to have everything to our liking. In a penny evening paper, which seems to be clever, and writes about everything, I have found out everything they mean to do;

and I quite agreed with him, that stupid people may misunderstand it. For instance, I don't like giving up the fleet; though no doubt it is a most expensive thing, and your dear Uncle William is now no more. But the first, and greatest of the Acts they mean to do, appears to me like a sign-post, with the finger of Providence upon it. Not that I should ever feel the very least desire. And nothing could come of it, in my time, of course. But it would be so beautiful for you, my dear!"

It took me some time, to discover what this meant. And my mother was not very anxious to explain. But at last I found out, that the sign-post pointed to my possession of the Twentifold estates, if Sir Roland were prohibited from having any heirs! That one of the best and simplest of her sex should have strayed into the snare of covetousness, (set by all measures, that dabble with property) determined me at once, to fight that measure to the utmost.

Bill Chumps was come back from his wedding tour (having been called to the bar, and the altar, one day after each other) but not as yet called into Parliament, by the voice of Sir Roland Twentifold. His father gave a dinner at "*The Best End of the Scrag*," because his own house was not large enough; and no man, who was there, ever tastes a fine joint, without saying—"Ah, but you should have had a cut from the baron, and the saddle of old Chumps, that day. I have often tasted fine meat; but by George, sir, I never knew what velvet was till then!" There was not a foreign kickshaw handed round; but any man, who wanted unintelligible compounds, might go and fill his spoon, at the sideboard.

Sir Roland was there, and made the speech of the evening, a great deal better than Bill's—for Bill got his at the back of his tongue beforehand, and then forgot every word of it; and his heart (being meant to play second fiddle) refused to come up, and take first one. But Roly did really roll it out, in a style which gave me great hopes, that he might upset most of the seven Bills of the enemy, without calling upon my poor resources. And we had a jolly evening, I can assure you; though there is no time to say any more about it now.

In return, I invited (with mother's good leave) a snug little party of loyal, enlightened, and truly large-hearted Conservatives to dinner, at our humble "Placid Bower," on the Monday evening, with the Session beginning on the following day. Mr. Windsor was there, and my old friend Jack (now growing very partial to Belinda Chumps), as well as Mr. Peelings, the great potato-dealer, Mr. Blewitt of the Indigo factory, and of course Mr. Chumps, and his son William, and several other gentlemen, one of whom was the owner of "*The Pratt Street Express*," a sound and influential journal. The object of the dinner was in the foremost place to dine; and then to deliver, for my comfort and direction, the safest, most practical, and constitutional counsels, ever yet vouchsafed to any youthful representative.

Of all these gentlemen, Jack included, there was not one but regarded me as sent into Parliament for his own use and benefit, as well as for a high example of wisdom, after following his advice. But the worst of it was, that no two of them gave me the same advice, beyond general precepts—to look sharp, to be cautious, to keep my pluck up. As soon as I wanted to thread my needle, and make my coat with their furnishing—behold, it was not even yarn, or I might say wool, grown long enough for combing. They had thought out none of the things they talked of; and the round-hand lessons in a copy-book would serve me as good a turn as theirs.

However, they all agreed in condemning all the seven great measures of the Government; although upon widely diverse grounds, disagreeing very warmly, as to what their badness was. And this made me doubt, when I came to dwell upon it, whether after all they could be so very bad. When a dog is tail-piped, sympathy arises in every bosom that has tails behind it; as soon as he is pelted, his merits grow on every one, who cannot find a stone to throw at him; but let him have sticks, bottles, tiles, flints, brickbats, each expressive of a different stand point, yet all promiscuously hurled at him,—and to every candid mind, that cannot get the window open, what is he, before he turns the corner? Why, a hero, a martyr, a saint of a dog.

CHAPTER XLI.
THE RIGHT WAY TO SURRENDER.

It is not in my power, to describe to you all the mixture, or the magnitude, of my feelings, when I entered what our noble journalists—who choose words, like oysters, by their fatness—call the "Portals of St. Stephen."

It is superfluous to say, that a policeman met me; the *differentia* of that species being to jump up (like the teeth of Cadmus) outside of all requirement, and to vanish (like Berenice's hair) inside it.

"You can't come in here, young man." He made this remark (looking over my head, for his stature was six feet four, and his mouth opened upwards, as all good police-mouths do) in a tone, which conveyed that it was unofficial, and required some apology for excess of affability.

"Peeler, yes he can though! He have a right in there;" exclaimed a voice behind me. "He don't look very nobby p'raps, with all that hair, but he have the same right as I have, Master Bobby. In marches Tommy Upmore, M.P. Tommy, now won't you shake hands with me? One old friend is worth a score of new ones. Without me, so help me Sammy, never would you be here, my boy! But I bears no malice, if your mind is the same. Shake hands, Tommy. There's worse gen'lemen to be found, than Joseph Cowle, Esquire, M.P."

Perhaps I have never received, or inflicted, a stronger sensation of surprise. This may have been, to find my own importance (which must have been growing too rankly) assaulted by a policeman, and asserted by a chimney sweep.

"Mr. Cowl?" I asked, while giving him my hand; though his own would not have been the worse for a "*repetatur haustus*" of the little boiler engine; "Have you quite recovered from your dreadful cold?"

"All Liberals suffers from throatiness," he replied; "same as Tories does from cheekiness. M.P. for Chimneystacks now I am, Tommy; with an e to the tail of my name as well. The missus would have it, with her education; though beyond me to pronounce it, without 'Cowly.' How you are going up the tree, hot cockles!"

"And you up the chimney!" I replied, with a glance at his dress, which was worthy of the first of May. "I never could have guessed who you were; and how could you recognise me, Mr. Cowly?"

"Come now! Come now!" He spoke, as a groom to a horse cutting too many capers. "After the print of you, on the title-page of all the leading magazines—'Head of hair unparalleled outside the Polar regions, 3*s*. 6*d*. per bottle, and then throw away your combs!' Ah, Tommy, dust comes perfessional to me. We know what sends you into this here crib. Five hundred a week, and a royalty on sales. Pays better than ledgery slating!"

I had heard of these absurd reports ere now, and I never hope to hear the last of them. Is there any credulity, among barbarians, a hundredth part as wild as that of the British public, in such matters? People of fair common sense, and with some experience of the world, believed that I was making an enormous income, by lending my name, and my countenance—full-front, profile, and three-quarters—to fellows who advertised hair-oil, balsams, electric, and fifty other sorts of comb, and even my own father's speciality, soap (such as cured all the convicts)—not one of whom, I deeply regret to assure you, upon my honour, as the member for Larkmount, ever paid me a shilling, or even asked me to dinner!

But one is apt to dwell too much upon such trifles. If I have put a penny (one per cent., honest) into any enterprising tradesman's pocket, I make him a present of the honest portion, which would not be worth legal expenses.

Questions of a thousandfold more importance thronged upon me now, as I entered the House, under convoy of the Member for Chimneystacks, who whispered to me, that the Dust-pan Bill was mainly of his own suggestion.

Having been introduced already, at the end of the Autumnal sitting, I did not require his services in that way, but found a quiet corner for my hat, and thought of the time when I put down my trencher some five years ago in the chapel of *Corpus*.

Then we rushed to hear the Royal Speech, rather like a mob of workmen, when the bell rings; and Sir Roland, whose strength lay in hurrying others more than himself, appeared quite at his leisure, and laughed, as he shook my hand, to find it trembling.

"You'll soon get over that;" he said, as if he had been some fifty years in Parliament. "But who is your friend with the dark complexion?"

I told him the story; but he did not laugh at all heartily, as I had expected.

"An exceedingly dangerous fellow," he exclaimed. "To be sure, I know all about him now. One of the cleverest of all the Clasts, with the true pass-word for the Cabinet. An anarchist, a socialist, a communist, and everything else that rhymes with fist, which is the only tool to meet them with. Chumps is the man for such fellows; but we shall not have him here for a fortnight. There now, Faithful Commons, go home. But they will have no homes to go to, except a common, if all this comes to pass. And yet, how well it has been made to sound, for people who do not care for sense!"

I was not of his opinion, upon that point. To my simple mind, plain English words, mainly of English birth, and showing (one after other) what they mean, without any tangles or knots in them, are the right words to move the English heart. Whoever speaks thus, wins all my ears, and goes a long way towards winning my heart; because he is my brother Englishman. And even for sound, what power is there, whatever the

scowl of the cloud may be, in long foreign thunder, below the horizon, and perhaps meaning something, in Italy, or Greece? But the Royal Speech, as usual, meant nothing anywhere; any more than the poor man, who foretells the weather.

"A greenhorn like you, Tommy," said Sir Roland, as if he had served at least through the Long Parliament, "would expect a great fight, and a smash-up, at once, to follow up that palaver. But Thong, who knows everything, tells me that nothing, except little Irish rows, will be on for a fortnight. And we can do a heap more good, he says, by going down to Silverside, and making Chumps safe, than by hanging about for any trumpery divisions. It is jolly to see a fellow in his troubles. Suppose we start to-morrow?"

"With all my heart;" I answered. And in saying this, I had used the right words, at the right moment. Not that I cared to see Bill in the straw so much, although it is a pleasant spectacle; but that I did long, with all my heart, to hear Laura's opinion on politics, with the whole of Her Majesty's speech cut out, and pasted up—as I had told her to do it—in the corner of my little room, where I meditated, and had left a woolly outline of my head against the wall.

Our work was to be at Silverside; where Bill and his father already were in residence, having taken the front that looked over the porch, on the High Street side of the "*Bull-and-Mouth Hotel*." William Chumps, Esquire, had brought down "his lady, a lovely bride of some nineteen summers," as the *Silverside Constitutional* described her, though I could depose that she was four and twenty, being eleven months older than myself, and no bride of any summer at all, but married to Bill for three months of the winter. There was no taint of envy in my feelings. She certainly looked very handsome, and had spent a good lump of her £12,000 in apparel; and Bill, of course, was mightily proud of her. But to dream, for a moment, that I was pining, as her melancholy manner towards me conveyed,—I longed very often to bring my Laura; but a

scene of that kind was not fitted for her! Patriotic sentiments repressed my private anger; and I worked very hard for Bill; and wrote him some good posters.

"Now, I am off for the *Towers*," I said to Sir Roland, only two days before the one fixed for the poll; "I can't stand any more of this, and Bill cannot want me any longer. I have had the very kindest letters from your mother; and if you prefer racket to home-life, I don't. I will meet you in London, any day you may appoint. But I must have a little quiet first. 'Tis as bad as a boat-race every day; and at Henley once I lost my nerve, from too much of it, and we got whacked."

"I see;" he replied, as he was fond of doing. "Another man's laurels, wreathed with orange-blossom, are hard to behold philosophically. Go, Tommy, go and recruit your roses. But remember our compact. You have won nothing yet."

He might say what he pleased, when he smiled like Laura; though his smile was strength, and hers was sweetness. That evening, I arrived where I was welcome; and the lovely blush, and soft whisper of a kiss, were worth a world of politics, and Parliament.

The privilege of changing their minds has always been handsomely yielded to fair ladies; so long as they do not change there with their precious hearts, and pure affections. I found my Laura in a vastly different political vein from her previous one. She had taken some peeps into the newspapers, not at all for the sake of the public, but for mine; and all the deep warmth of her nature was stirred, by the Radical outrage, to her country and her home.

"About the suffrage, and the Constitution, and the Abstinence-cause, I know nothing, or less than nothing—as gentlemen express it, though I don't see how there can be less than nothing;" she said to me, the very day after my arrival. "But about right and wrong, everybody has a right to some opinion. For poor landowners, what is it but robbery, downright robbery, to take away their land, and compel them to start afresh to earn

more? But, oh, Tommy, Tommy, it takes all my breath away, to think of surrendering the English fleet to the bitterest enemies of England! Oh, come in here, that I may show you something it will strengthen all your principles to see."

There are few things more impressive to the model British mind—of which mine is, I am proud to say, a very tidy specimen—than a genuine series of ancestors in oil, proved (by internal and external evidence) extraneous to Wardour Street. Monuments perhaps have a still grander savour, especially recumbent figures of the Knight, and his Lady, on a slab together, with the little ones that failed to come to harm, sculpturally coming up, like frogs for the blessing. But these are very rarely to be found in any Chancel, or Chapel, by the dozen; while the pictures have an old family habit of keeping together. And to me it appeared that the Twentifold race were what our dear cousins, (who supply our slang, after stealing our standards) call "real grit," for never having driven me, or anybody else, into this caravan of dead Twentifolds. For my gallery of ancestors was restricted to a photograph of my dear father, and an ancient daguerreotype of Uncle Bill.

"Oh, Laura," I cried, when I saw them stretching, (like the windows of a Stop-at-all-Stations-train) for a furlong without any corner; "how can you look at all these great people, and come down from them, to a nobody like me?"

"Hush!" she said. "How dare you talk like that? I didn't bring you here, to be impudent, Tommy."

"But I am astonished," I replied, "astonished, that with all these looking at you, you can look at me!"

"What is there astonishing in it?" she asked, coming up, and putting both hands on my shoulders. "It is, because I love you, dear."

At any other time, I must have kissed her, for those simple, and noble words. It was no thought of all those ancestors that robbed me of that pleasure; but I could not bear that she should look into my eyes, and see

how full they were of tears. Then I ventured to put my arm round her waist, and she gave me her left hand, to comfort me.

"Here's the fine old gentleman, I brought you in to look at;" her voice was quite gay again, to pass the fuss over; "does he look, as if he would surrender our fleet, to the enemies of England?"

"He looks fitter to make all her enemies surrender. What a resolute face, and how his foot is planted! Ah, if we had any man to plant his foot, and shut his mouth in that style, now! All open mouth now—as Roly says—open mouth, tongue instead of chin, and instead of strong fist, chattering fingers. A man of that stamp can never have belonged to any time later than Nelson's. No Government would employ him now, in any of our trumpery 'demonstrations.' Let me look at him. It does me good."

The picture, being by no well-known artist, would doubtless be called a daub, by all art-critics rightly flourishing. But to me it seemed full of life and spirit, not always to be found in mighty masters. An Admiral of the ancient days, and himself growing ancient, stood at a gangway before his men, to repel assault of boarders. In his right hand was a big sword, flashing almost as brightly as his eyes, while his left hand pointed to the Union-jack, waving through a cloud of smoke above.

"Who was he?" I asked. "He means to do it. I should have been sorry to board that ship?"

She drew from behind the frame a plate of gilt metal, engraved in red, "Admiral Sir Rupert Towers-Twentifold, A.D. 1740."

"Yes, he did it;" she answered, with her eyes almost as bright as his; "He cut three men down, with his own hand, and then leaped on board the Spanish ship, drove the crew below, and captured it. He was the sixth back in straight line from Roly; and Roly sometimes looks exactly like him. That makes it my favourite picture of them all. Though I like Roly better, when he looks quiet."

"It won't do to look quiet always;" I replied, with the spirit of the conflict caught; "except for such sweet souls as you. Darling, you make lovely patchwork. Will you do a little job for me, without a word to any one?"

CHAPTER XLII.
SPARS.

The Government had intended wisely to deal the first of their seven great blows at the weal of their hostile Country, with the Bill (which they were sure to pass) for swamping the votes of the enemy. With this once done, to suit their book, any dissolution of Parliament must redound to their sole benefit. But this pretty plot was not played out, according to arrangement; for the Irish members stopped it.

These, although they had their own bear-garden now in College Green, found treason there too orthodox to afford any pure enjoyment, and made a point of coming over to keep their pepper-boxes hot; which, according to the Kill-England Compact, were to be at their service for ever. And still sticking together—like bots in a horse, though without any humour apparent—they made everything go, or not go, according to their own appetite.

Their appetite now was all wide-mouth, for the third part of our fleet, protocolled to them; and with national ardour, and stupidity, they roared for the passing of that Bill at once; and the Government, of course, gave way to them. Stupidity I say, because if they had waited for the Dust-pan Bill, they would have had our fleet entire.

"Gentlemen, I begin to have some little hope now;" Sir Roland said to us, as soon as we had finished an excellent dinner, as his guests, at the *Cockles* Club—for so everybody calls the "Horatius Cocles" at Westminster Bridge. There were twenty of us there, all M.P.'s; and not one would have feared to take a header off the bridge, having Mr. Panclast under his arm. "To-morrow the fight begins; and the enemy (through his own currish nature) affords us one more chance. If he had taken up the dust-pan first, with the regiment behind him that sucks his buttons, he must have swept everything before him. But in dread of

O'Woundy, and Digger, he takes up the craze every Briton cries shame at, before he has thoroughly gagged them. I need not remind you, that public opinion, as it used to be called, is against this Bill, more than all the others put together. But public opinion is a dead letter now; since the Press tried to pass their own for it. And even if it had the Press to back it, the Hecatons would light their pipes with it. To me it appears that our last chance lies in the ghost, long expatriated, of patriotism; if only it might for one half-hour revisit the glimpses of this English moon. But what says our excellent and powerful ally, the newly elected of Silverside?"

Bill, though he had only got his seat three days, had already made two speeches; and being always full of argument, he was glad to make another. But, as he made another, containing the very same observations in the House, next day, I need not report what he said just now. Not that I would blame any man, for saying the same things twice, or twenty times. No man can put a new head to his hammer, every time he thumps a block of coal; and we Britons used to be a fine block of Wallsend, hard to splinter, and impossible to crack, without fifty good thumps in the hole of each other. The Government knew this, and made their fire of the rubble.

Our case, though the best that could possibly be found, seemed likely to be a bad one. Mr. Thong, who knew exactly how every vote would go, reported that the best we could hope for was a minority of fifty. Every Irishman, of course, would vote for the glory of Ireland, and the disgrace of Great Britain. Except some half-dozen, who had been in our Army, or Navy, and still had some regard for the old flag. So that our hearts were very gloomy, when the great debate began.

The Government introduced their Bill, with the old clap-traps about "universal peace, goodwill everywhere, fraternity of nations, symmetry, harmony, beneficence of commerce, expansion of the intellect, and so on. To all these noble things now there remained one wretched little obstacle, which it was our duty and our privilege to remove at once, the

leprous stain of blood-guiltiness, and greed"—in the mill of their eloquence they ground up metaphors—"and that obstacle was the ambition of England. If once we proffered, to the world at large, this magnificent pledge of our candour, confidence, and chivalrous resolve not to raise our hands against those who might indeed appear desirous to trample on our bodies, but would abstain, when they found them so defenceless,—then, and not till then, should we be able to claim the proud title of promoters of the glorious cause of humanity." There was a great deal more, even finer than this; but is it not written in the chronicles of Hansard?

The Liberal benches were rent with explosions of applause, like an ancient fig tree; while on our side presently, an honourable Member gained earnest attention, by imitating to a nicety the clucking of a hen, that calls her chicks together.

Being new to the manners of the House, and zealous upon all points of order, up I jumped, and began to run about, trying to catch with my hat the Dame Partlet, so intrusive in high places. Roars of laughter were my reward, the greatest of great guns joining in; and even the omnipotent premier gave me a smile of extraordinary sweetness. I had earned the good-will of the House for ever; and until I am grey, I shall be called "Green Tommy."

Now, this may seem a very small, and childish affair, at a time most truly momentous; and some will accuse me of my accustomed triviality in recounting it. But without fear of contradiction from any then present, and able to form opinion, whether Liberal or Conservative, I say that the cluck of an imaginary hen changed the fortunes of Great Britain, for at least ten years; though her foes will prevail in the end, no doubt. That is to say, unless there is, from time to time—as there ought to be, according to analogy—an outbreak of savage fury, havoc, mad bestiality, and wallowing murder, in that centre, heart, soul, brain, Queen, star, crown, sun, and Deity of the universe, which Mr. Windsor calls "Parree."

Insanity there makes London sane; as a man I know well, who cut down his best friend—too late, alas! for any but the Coroner—has been afraid ever since to go near a belfry.

But the turn, by which that cluck saved our *Capitol*, had nothing to do with either vigilance, or terror, but simply led up to a condition of good humour. Good humour, which is sure to come after a laugh, and a boyish laugh especially, brings back to the mind of a man, for a moment, that he is not the only man in the world. He may not be able to believe it very long, and is quite certain not to remember it; still, even to fancy that there are some others, improves his behaviour, a good bit.

The Government saw, that the vein of the moment was not at all in their favour; and two of the Cabinet went to crave leave of the Irish Members, to put off the division. Sir Roland told me, that he hoped they would get it; while I, knowing nothing of tactics, hoped that the matter might be settled out of hand, while the Members appeared so light-hearted. For surely no Briton, unless in "the blues,"—which all Rads, from disease of the conscience, suffer—would vote for abandoning every stick and stone, that our fathers gave their poor brave lives for. But Roly was right, and I was wrong; as appeared most plainly afterwards. The Irish captain, desiring for a reason of his own, to oblige the prime-minister, gave orders that the debate might be adjourned, if the Government particularly wished it.

This, as you will see, proved a good chance for us. But to take things in their proper order, refreshing my memory by the notes of the Member for Silverside, who had learned shorthand, I find pretty nearly as follows.

When the Bill was entirely before the House—in all its perfect symmetry, according to their language, in all its naked enormity, according to ours—the Leader of the Opposition rose, and in the most courteous and placid manner (which alone might have proved, by its difference from theirs, on which side sense and justice lay) moved, not the entire rejection of the Bill—for that appeared too hopeless, in the teeth of their vast majority—but a moderate amendment, which had been considered

(as half a loaf is better than no bread) to be the utmost an Englishman could hope for. Inasmuch as our foreign possessions, and our fleet, were declared by the voice of the Universe, to be a standing menace to civilization, and an outrage to all foreign sentiment, he proposed that the fortresses should be dismantled, and the fleet blown up, instead of being handed over intact, for the use of our enemies. This enraged the Government, almost more than the direct negation would have done. The usual outcry against half-measures arose; and to support it, arose Mr. I. Beright.

This was a very great orator, one of the greatest of all recent times; because he possessed, what our ancestors had, but we for the most part have lost,—the power of putting plain meaning into plain words. A very great man as well, from the clearness, and solid consistence of his mind; and even yet greater he might have been, if Nature had endowed him with the power also of saying "I be wrong," sometimes. However, it was a real treat to hear him, whatever one's opinion of his might be; because there was no need to fish for his meaning, and be vexed with oneself, for not catching it. Indeed, so immense was the force of his words, and his aspect so large and commanding, that it took me a long time to set up again my own weak convictions, against his strong ones. Luckily, however, some little fellows followed, who, doing their utmost to deepen his track, succeeded very nicely in obliterating it; like a lot of children following a giant in the snow. Several members also of the Opposition spoke, appealing to the buried bones of patriotic principle, and reading long extracts from obsolete speeches, and solemn declarations of the present premier; all of which were capable of being explained away, whenever there was no denying them. And at half-past two, the debate was adjourned, on the motion of Lord Grando Crushbill.

CHAPTER XLIII.
THE BATTLE, AND THE BREEZE.

All Europe had concluded long ago, that the Government of England had left itself no other blunder to commit, and no further disgrace to fall into. But all Europe was wrong in this conclusion; for before our debate came on again, tidings of a new disaster, and one more foul scorn to British blood, and heart, rang through the streets of London. Those streets were, by this time, so well used to the sound of surrenders, and massacres, seizures by Russia of this, and of that, and French bombardment of Britons, that they took it as calmly as the passing of the plague-cart in September, 1665. Men, full of business, shook their heads at the newsboys, (who spoil their own traffic with chalk, as England has done with her flourish of "free-trade") and the extra editions of the evening papers went back to their offices, except a few copies, sold to visitors wise enough to live far north. In short, the public knew it all, without paying, and kept all their halfpence, to pay for the result.

We, who were punctual, heard it all (after prayers) announced, in a telegraphic voice; as a thing which should go in at one ear, and out at the other, in every head giving up its brains, (as every head, that has got any, does) to the only one worth counting. The Liberal Members seemed thankful for the news; because we could scarcely have rescued the hero, and redeemed our faith, for twelve hundred pounds; and because it set us free, to look after some other, who would truckle more kindly, and pay his own way. But we thought it very bad—very bad indeed; though, of course, it was treason to say so. And none of us saw any light in it; which shows that our eyes were not open.

This piece (of a piece with the rest) of foreign news, happened to arrive on a Saturday; and we (for the sake of the fifty-two reforms) had a Saturday sitting already; which lasted in fact until Church-time on

Sunday, and must have despatched any other prime-minister to a place, where even he would scarcely hold all preferment. However, his influence adjourned the fourth commandment—as it used to treat the third—even in the souls of Scotchmen.

For the few, who like to see one of our disasters discussed upon its merits, the best chance is, when the news arrives near about noon of Saturday. It is too late then, for the evening papers to shed their mild light upon it, even if they all employed the gentleman, who settles (at a glance, and a stroke) all the monthly labour of the magazines. And as for the Sunday papers, any that were not out on Friday night (reversing the premier's chronology) have shut their frames now, and are working off. This is as it should be, enabling a sound Briton to go to church, without praying for the Commination Service.

Then upon Monday morning, like a string of horses who have observed the sabbath, with a loud neigh and caper, rush forth the morning papers. They swallow up the earth, like the horse of Job, trample under foot a few writers of fiction—as though they had none on their own backs—scatter the thunder of their neck (or cheek) upon every man they have no fear of, and with one or two quiet exceptions, go down upon their knees, for the jockey of the period to mount them, if he deigns.

But on this Monday morning, they came out mildly, (the most rampant nag knows where his oats are kept) sniffing the air for the direction of the breeze; and going gingerly, as if some English flint remained. And they found very speedily, and so did we, that the great steam roller had not crushed out every power of spark from our ancient metal.

"The tone of the Press is changed, at last;" Sir Roland Twentifold said to me, when the House was meeting for the final issue; "too late to help their Country much; but in time to give waverers some excuse for wavering. There will be as full a House, as ever was known. But our seats are safe. Come, and let me introduce you to Lord Grando."

This was the nobleman who had lately come to the forefront of honour, and of justice; in right of plain language, clear mind, and fine pluck. Whether he were a fine Christian or not, is more than I can pretend to say, but he observed one leading precept, infinitely better than his great opponent. When men reviled him, and persecuted him, and said all manner of evil against him, he rejoiced, and was exceeding glad. And of this joy he had ample store, to last for many generations. "*Horrida grando*" was his name with the Rads; and he always came down upon them, like a pelt of hail. Yet he carried no frost in his tail; for his manner was vigorous, warm, and stimulating.

"I am to begin, as you know;" he said, with a gay smile, to Sir Roland, in whom he had found a fearless spirit, equal even to his own. "I have great hopes. What say you?"

"He has the true old English spirit, he never knows when he is beaten;" Roly said to me, as we went to our seats, for a crush of Members came pouring in. "And I will tell you another thing, Tommy,—he will not be beaten always. If we can only dish that Dust-pan Bill, (or even if we have it) I will back him for First Lord of the Treasury. All he wants is mellowing, and time will bring it."

Before the resumption of the great debate, a few little questions were asked, concerning the very sad news of Saturday. The Leader of the Government replied, that "there had scarcely been time as yet, to verify the last official despatches. However, there appeared to be some grounds to apprehend, that another unforeseen, and inevitable disaster, in some measure, had befallen the British arms. A limited number of British officers appeared, to some extent, to have lost their lives, in the execution of their duty. This, however, was beyond prevision. They might have incurred some risk, and indeed the result appeared to confirm that view. But Her Majesty's Government had incurred no responsibility whatever, having simply accepted parenthetical functions under—certainly not the Man-in-the-Moon, as an honourable Member

suggested, with a levity incomprehensible, and most reprehensible—but under the legitimate and legitimately constituted authorities of—well, of the locality."

Being asked, if the dead men were our flesh and blood, he replied, that "to such an interrogation, highly impolitic in the present condition of difficult and delicate negotiations, seven different forms of reply, very naturally, and conclusively presented themselves. But without further advices, and instructions, and the necessary period for their consideration, it became his duty to deprecate further expenditure of public time."

Being asked, whether these men had not been sent, with the strongest pledges any words could give, to back them up with a British force, and under most solemn assurance, that every act of theirs would be the direct act of the Government of England; he replied, that "no less than fourteen, entirely distinct and apparently materially repugnant, yet easily reconcilable constructions, might be placed upon their sealed instructions. Each of these interpretations had its own undeniable merits, and claim to unbiassed, and leisurely discussion. And, for that purpose, each of them, as simply as possible, and yet essentially, presented itself, with a convenient quadrifurcation. As soon as negotiations were concluded—by which he did not mean, 'as soon as all our men were killed;' though the honourable Member was welcome to his croak—he would gladly undertake to appoint a day, for the discussion of those fifty-six issues. Meanwhile, he refused to be badgered."—Wherewith down he sat; as no other man can.

His candour, good temper, and unusual lucidity were rewarded with an outburst of natural applause; while the Member for ——, whose brother had been killed, arose as if to speak; but could not do it.

But not quite so easily did the great man get off. Without condescending to consult mephitic oracles, Lord Grando Crushbill arose, and spoke well upon the main question before us. He met the vile Bill, with no weak amendment, no confession and avoidance, but the downright "damn,"

which every foreigner knows well, to be the word whereby we live. No precedent could be discovered, for this brief form of suggesting rejection, and the Speaker pronounced that it was not in accordance with strict Parliamentary usage, for the noble Member to move—"Damn the Bill;" or at least for the motion to be entered.

That speech of Lord Grando—a genuine Philippic—is well known to every true Briton; and as no other man will ever read this book, unless it be a stout American, it is needless for me to cite it here. But while he went on, there was gnashing of teeth, and signs of pale liver disease among the folk, who have learned from Egypt nothing but Egyptian courage, and from Africa in general, the Ostrich-trick. After that, it sounded very mild to move, that the Bill be read this day six months!

To second this motion, Chumps arose; as had been arranged beforehand. And Bill spoke uncommonly well, so far as I am a judge of such matters. He went at it, as if he was splitting down a sheep, for a good customer come for kidneys—his father was the first man in London, I believe, who put kidneys up to twopence halfpenny, and fourpence is the price in that same shop now, and my mother stopped her ears when they asked her such a figure, and did the same thing when she told me of it—however, there was no mistake about Bill's meaning. He had not left Oxford long enough as yet, to forget all the very plain directions of Aristotle, Cicero, and Horace; and whatever was in him, he showed us very honestly, with meat-saw, and chopper, and no hems of flank tucked under. If any objection could be made, it was this—that he followed his father in the way of good weight, perhaps a little more substance than we wanted for our money; as a marrow-bone swindles us, by being solid.

Things happen oddly in this odd world; and a few years ago, could anybody have imagined that the brush of Joe Cowl, the chimney-sweep, would ever come out at the top of the pot of the English Constitution? And not only so, but that you would find it there, brandished against, and quite covering with smuts the new bright steel cleaver from the shop

of Mr. Chumps! Time works wonders; and perhaps you will exclaim, that the greatest wonder of all was the fact, that the son of "Bubbly Upmore" the boiler—however, let that stop till we come to it.

Joe had a very large command of words, irregular perhaps, and undisciplined, and more than once, we had to call out, "Order!" At first, from professional habit, he stopped, and pulled out his book, as if to enter "Kitchen-chimney, at five o'clock;" which made Bill, and me, who understood this motion, look at one another, and laugh heartily. Moreover, he had a large command of voice; as behoved a man who had beaten all the rest on his walk, with the shrill cry of, "Se-veep!" I whispered to the honourable Member on our side, who had done the hen so beautifully; and he (being gifted with ventriloquism) in the middle of one of Joe's grandest passages, upset the whole effect, by producing the loud call of the trade, in its longest melancholy—"Se-veep!" so that Joe jumped round, and stared; as if a rival bag, and brush were after him. This was not fair play perhaps; but Cowle deserved it; for the whole of his eloquence was nothing but abuse. He blackened all the people, on whose shillings he had lived, and besmutted everybody with a slate above his head. In short, there was no man, or woman, in existence, with any right to be so, except Joseph Cowle.

We wanted Sir Roland to deliver his speech next; but he said, perhaps too loudly, "I never follow sweeps;" and presently the House was listening to a gentleman, who is always heard with pleasure for his brave manly sentiments, impartiality, and scorn of all pretences. He demolished the Bill, in most admirable style, putting all the arguments against it, better than our side had put them; and then to my surprise declared, that in spite of all that, he had made up his mind to vote for it.

This brought up Sir Roland, and his speech was very fine. Strong indignation made strong words; as the wrath of the billow creates its roar. "For finicking argument what care I? Can a man split straws with a dagger at his throat? Eternal shame falls upon our land, that any man in it should have dreamed of such an act. The man who proposed such an

outrage, must have done it, as a lesson towards the stabbing of his own mother." For this he was loudly called to "order;" but disdained the call, and went on reckless. "Where can I find words strong enough? The difficulty is, not to fashion, but to find them. Language has never been made for such cases; for what tongue could have told, that such a case would ever be? Yet, perhaps, it was as well, that there should be this defect; for what language could move lunatics?" Here there was a great row; but Sir Roland's voice was strong. "The word I have used may not be of high courtesy; but it is of deepest charity. I can look across this House, with my hands hanging down, solely upon that supposition. Her Majesty's Ministers love to leave us in the dark. They keep us so still—whether common sense demands their consignment to strait-waistcoat, or to the gallows."

Seldom perhaps has any "limited number of human beings" made a greater row—except in some Liberal massacre—than was now to be had, in all sizes and samples, among men whose names are watchwords. I saw—though he tried to do it quite behind his hat—a Right Honourable Member, whose name is fame, make a trumpet of his hand, and blow out the most hideous screech that ever quelled a "railway-hooter;" and I could not have believed my eyes, unless my ears had been at the back of them. In a word, there was no word, neither any sense among us, head being gone universally, and body left working about, like a worm cut in two.

In the thick of this turmoil, Lord Grando came up, and shook hands with Roly; who was now as quiet, as the stump of the match, that has blown up the castle.

"Something like a maiden speech that was," he said; "but the guillotine maiden, I'm afraid my dear fellow. And we shall operate first upon our own heads. However, better that than slow poisoning."

At first, I did not understand what he meant; but seeing that Roly did, I asked him to explain. He seemed to find me wonderfully stupid—as I am, especially when at all excited, and by this time I was all excitement—

but he managed to explain that he had done more harm, than good by his strong short eloquence. He had moved many hearts, which had been covered up (for reasons of Inland Revenue, like a vehicle unused), but he had not done it in the way to bring them out, comfortably, and with himself inside them. To do that properly, there must be no appearance of call, or demand, or anything at all unpleasant—such as rebukes of conscience are—but a gentle opening of a quiet door at first; as if one came by accident, to find something that belonged to one. But who can blame Roly, for not understanding that? He had stirred up right feeling, all the wrong way of the grain; and it was not at all thankful, for being stirred up.

After many more speeches, some right and some wrong, and—which seemed to be first thought of—some good, and some bad; the Prime-Minister rose, to wind up the debate, at about ten minutes past midnight. The House was as silent as a hive of smoked bees, with just one fellow, here and there, not quite dead. I prepared myself for the finest treat of ears, and mind, and perhaps of heart also—though he seldom troubles that—and I said to myself, "No prejudice, if you please!"

However, it was useless to say that. When a man, coming out of his front door, sees another man hacking down his pet tree, is the sense of high art supreme with him? Does he stop to admire the attitude, the muscles, the skilful swing, the bright implement? Nay, rather, in a fine rage, out he rushes, and shouts, "What do you mean by this, sir?"

But making allowance for all my "paltry wrath"—as his sycophants call it—I found it impossible to catch the great man's meaning, as it should be caught. That is to say, well over the heart, thrown straight at it, as a good fielder throws up, and not over one's head, or between one's legs, or twisting in and out, like a left-handed bowler's ball. But for all that, I felt that his voice was grand, and his power enormous; if he would have used it simply, and after the manner of his favourite author. The fault perhaps lies in the multiplicity of his mind, which does not consider the simplicity of ours.

Perhaps, he never had a worse cause to plead; and in the bottom of his heart—which is sound, I do believe—he must have known that, far better than our shallow natures knew it. When at last; he broke out of the dense haze of argument into the pure sky of eloquence, almost he persuaded me not be an Englishman, but for the thought that he himself was one.

"All up now, Tommy!" Sir Roland said to me, as the last tones of that silvery voice, like music for the dead, hung hovering; "after that, it is all up with England."

But I answered—"Hold my belt, a minute. I will try it, whatever comes of it."

For the last two hours, and indeed for the whole of the evening, I had felt throughout my system, that it was in a very extraordinary state. Thumping of the heart, and great expansion of the chest, tingling of arms and legs, and great inhalings of hot light air, had confused me; and whenever a draught from the ventilators (which are like a blow of steam) came under me, I seemed to feel my dress (which I had chosen for its lightness), fill, like the feathers of a bird at rising. Sometimes indignation, sometimes pleasure, sometimes lofty ambition to be useful to my Country, and to Laura's, had been hoisting at me, like a balanced lever. "Don't be afraid," I said, "I can't stop down, any longer. But try to get me a hearing."

To the sudden astonishment of the crowded House, (which could scarcely believe its own eyes at first) I, Tommy Upmore, went up gently, and steadily, as a ring of blue smoke rises, from a cigar, where no draught is. Honourable Members were leaving their seats, for the critical Division, which should split up England; but with one accord, they all turned round and stared. Remembering what Professor Brachipod had told me, I used my hands and feet so well, with my curls spread out to catch the air, that I steered my course, as accurately as I ever steered a boat to bump another. Beneath me, there seemed to be breathless amazement; but I found myself perfectly calm, and smiled.

Avoiding all peril of fire, I hovered, with buoyant delight in every fibre, and a tingle of disdain at the terror of the House—for the greatest men looked quite small down there—till I came to a large beam of the roof; heart of British oak it was; and against it I brought up, with a perfectly erect, and perhaps dignified presentment.

In this position, I caught the Speaker's eye, and removing my hat, which I placed upon the beam, made my bow to him, and sought permission to address the House. The debate being closed, and the division-bell ringing, I could hardly expect to be allowed to speak. But the case was exceptional; and more than that, everybody longed to hear what I had got to say. The Right Honourable, the Speaker, raised his wig, to be certain that his head was right, under it; and with no further symptom of surprise—for he had seen a great many stranger sights than this—said slowly,

"I find no precedent, for a speech from the roof, by any Honourable Member. But I am willing to be guided by the sense of the House, in a case so unprecedented."

Then the silence, which was now becoming painful to me, by reason of my loneliness up there, was broken with loud cries of, "Speak up, Larkmount!" from Members who did not know my name,—"Speak up, Tommy!" from the gentlemen who did; and "Speak down, Tommy!" from my private friends, who were beginning to understand all about it.

"The Honourable Member for Larkmount has possession of the House," said Mr. Speaker.

"Sir," I replied, in a very clear voice, at the same time unbuttoning my coat, which was made like the one I had flown with at Happystowe; "I will not presume upon your indulgence, nor trespass on the kindness of the House below me, except with a very brief quotation, well known to all British Members, whom I would ask to join me in reciting it."

I had now drawn forth a little Union Jack, made for me by my darling; and flinging it open from its hollow silver staff, waved it in the strong light, around my head, keeping time with the noble lines I sang, in a voice that made the heart of oak resound, and the hearts and lungs of men rebound—

"The flaunting flag of liberty,
  Of Gallia's sons the boast,
Oh never may a Briton see,
  Upon the British coast!

"The only flag that freedom rears,
  Her emblem on the seas,
Is the flag that braves a thousand years,
  The battle, and the breeze.

"But fast would flow the nation's tears,
  If traitor hands should seize
The flag that braves a thousand years,
  The battle, and the breeze.

"And shall we yield to dastard fears
  Our empire of the seas—
The flag that braves a thousand years,
  The battle, and the breeze?"

Every face was turned towards me, and every throat joined in with mine, and every arm was waved (even of the Irish Members) to keep time with my waving of the glorious flag. And perhaps there has never been a vaster roar, even in the British House of Commons, than when I came down, with my flag flying bravely, bowed deeply to the Speaker, for his good grace, and took Sir Roland's arm, to go with him to the lobby; for my head was giddy, with excitement, and timidity.

"Keep up your pluck, Tommy," whispered Sir Roland; "you have done it this time, I believe, my boy. By Jove, how splendidly you sang! You have saved the Country, and won Laura."

CHAPTER XLIV.
THE ENGLISH LION.

People, who care for nothing, are capable of saying almost anything; but even of these, there are not many, who would call the British House of Commons, a sentimental body. But anybody, being at all a body, must now and then feel its flesh rebel at the ghostly proceedings of its Cock-loft tenant. Pure reason (like the doctrine of free trade) is a very fine existence, if it would only work. But, alas! like the other, it finds practical issue mainly in keeping people out of work.

The deep love of our birth, which arises with our life, rose anew in the heart of every Englishman, and forced him to scorn petty faction, and vote, as his father and mother would have made him. The infamous and traitorous plot (which would have ended, in the ancient days, at Tower Hill) ended in a very hot majority of more than fifty, against the Government. As a last faint hope, they appealed to the Country, which had long borne patiently its sickness of them.

Pending my second return for Larkmount, (which took to itself all the glory of my deed, and pelted every Radical, who dared to show his nose, near the bottom of the hill it stood upon) I ventured to pay a little visit to the Towers; though perhaps I should have waited, till the issue was secure. But I make bold to say, from my own experience, that no one, who has been through all the ins and outs of love, as I have been obliged to do, can stop without hurrying to the end of them, whether good or bad. And in the sad humility, which true love feels, I was even scared by fancies, that my darling might dislike the unusual course I had adopted, for her sake. It was pretty sure to cause some curiosity about her, and perhaps even nasty scientific questions, such as seem to have no reverence for the sanctity of home. Few names were more conspicuous than mine, just now, as perhaps was only natural; and I could not resent

it. In a very short time, that would be wiped out; for fame is no better than a schoolboy's slate; and the surest way to expunge it, is to try to write it deeper. My little notoriety soon became a nuisance to me; all I cared for was, that those I loved should love me for my own sake; and any public reputation seems to interfere with that.

Therefore, I have never felt more humble in my life, than when I sat by Laura's side, one lovely April day, beneath the famous Oak-tree, which her mother was fond of sketching. The only leaves upon the tree were a few that had stood the winter; and the young buds were not ready yet, to push their faded history by.

I had always been handy with my knife, from the time I cut bread and bacon with it; and now I carved upon the bench "T. U.," while she looked on, and encouraged me.

Then I said, "Let me put something much better now. Over it I shall cut 'L. T. T.' And when you come here, after I am gone, you will be compelled to think of me."

"How strange you are, Tommy!" she said, as I sharpened my knife on my boot, for my feet are as fine as a lady's. "Any one who did not know you well, would think that your fame had been too much for you. You are not half so simple, as you used to be. I suppose, you expect to be Prime Minister, when the Conservatives come in."

I took no notice of this, because I wanted her to go on with it. So I carved a very excellent "L. T.," while she kept on looking at the cows and sheep.

"Dear me!" she cried, pulling out her watch from a place, which was a very great favourite with my arm; "I had no idea it was so late. I must leave you to finish your sculpture, I am afraid. Good-bye, Tommy, for a long time now."

"What must be, must;" I replied with great firmness. And then up I jumped, with my knife in my hand, because she was making off so fast. "Don't be in such a dreadful hurry, Laura. Why, you are crying, dear!"

"Am I indeed? And even if I were, it need not disturb the condition of your mind. All you care about now is politics, like Roly. How I do despise all politics!"

"And so do I; except for one little thing;" I answered, "and you know well what that little thing is."

"Yes, a very little thing indeed," she replied, taking good care not to look at me; "the smallest thing in all the world, no doubt."

"Do try to have some particle of reason;" I exclaimed.

"I am all pure reason itself," she replied.

"You are all pure beauty, and warm heart;" I answered; "and what is the good of saying, that you don't care about me?"

"Did I say that? I don't believe I ever did. I was only trying to think it, when you behaved so badly. But if I said that, it was a great story, Tommy."

"You know what the penalty for a story is;" I answered. And her eyes shone with sunny tears, while she paid it.

"Darling sweet," I said, for I never touched her, without being carried quite beyond myself; "all I was waiting for, was to know, what last letter I might put here. I want to put a 'U;' I so long to put a 'U;' the one you in the world that just suits me to a T. 'Laura Towers Upmore.' I won't do it, without your full permission."

"Well, dear," she replied, after some consideration; "Roly has given his full consent now; and my dear mother loves you, like her own son. And I —well, never mind about me; I am nobody. Only I feel, that your time should not be wasted, with all the great things that you will have to do, after saving the Country, to begin with. So perhaps it would be wiser, dear, to put me down with 'U.'"

Now what do you suppose that I did next? Embraced her, kissed her, shed tears with her? As young people do, when they agree to get married, to practise for the time to come. Nay, such things are not to be talked about; or why were trees made, and benches, and moss (the very essence, and symbol of silence, all the year), and houses far off, to show what is to come, yet not blink a window beyond their own doors?

The real thing that I did—which will stir every female heart, tenfold more than chastest salutations—was done with a thumb and finger pushed, on each side simultaneously, to the bottom of my double-breasted waistcoat pockets.

"Look at these, Laura, while I put our names into a true lover's knot;" I said, just as if it was a pair of blue kidney-beans I was showing. "They are come to be eclipsed, my darling, by the brilliance of your eyes."

"Why, they are amethysts! But I never saw such amethysts. They seem to have such a lot of light inside them!"

"So they have, Laura. But what a cold light, darling, compared with what comes from your heart into mine!"

* * * *

There is nothing that cannot be denied; except that the present condition of things is a great deal better than the past. The humbug of "free trade" is dead at last. The blessing of "Paternal Government" (delivered over the wrong dish of broth) is gone back, like a curse, to roost at home. An Englishman now may eat his breakfast, without gulping down more lies than tea; and may smile at his children, without a smothered sigh, at prolonging a race of dastards. In a word, we have once more a Government, that knows its own mind, and has a mind to know. Whether it be Radical, or Tory, matters little to the average Englishman; so long as it acts with courage, candour, common sense, and consistency. But if its policy be anarchy, quibbling, robbery, cowardice, and treason—then we cast it out (like a leper, and a leopard, mingling sores, and spots,

and crawl) and, to save our home, recall that true supporter of our shield and sword, noble once, and not yet ignoble, the sturdy old lion of England.

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*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE REMARKABLE HISTORY OF SIR THOMAS UPMORE, BART., M.P., FORMERLY KNOWN AS "TOMMY UPMORE" ***

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