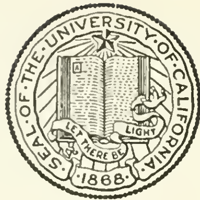

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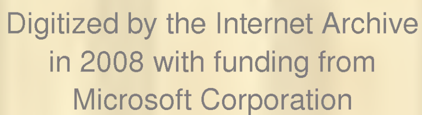
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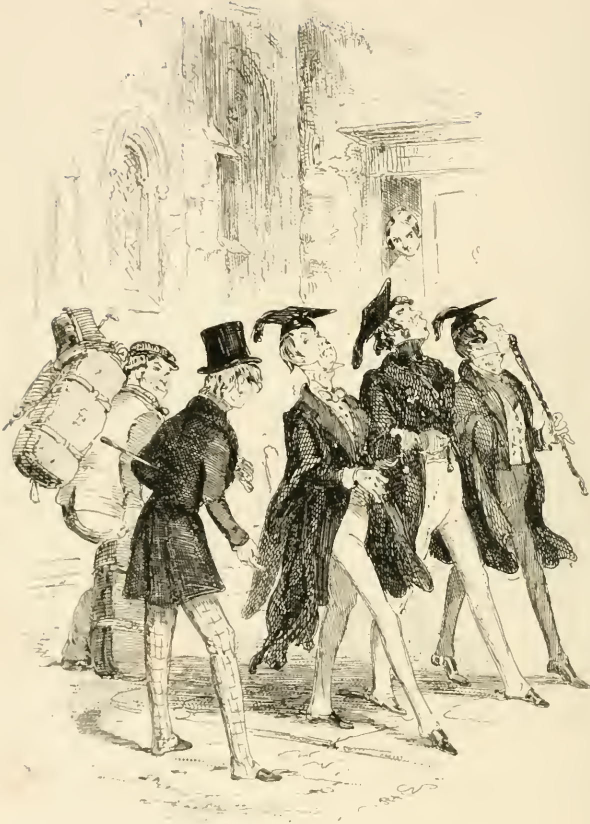

PETER PRIGGINS,

THE

COLLEGE SCOUT.

EDITED BY

THEODORE HOOK, ESQ.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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PETER PRIGGINS.

CHAPTER XV.

After the Easter vacation, which my hero and his friend Compo, more to their satisfaction than their governors', passed in London with several old Rotherwickians, they booked their places for Oxford, in the Blenheim coach. At the office was a Cambridge man, who was going down for a week, just to see the sister University, and to test the merits of the undergraduate port. Ninny and Compo agreed to secure the box-seat, and to toss up who should occupy it; but, on speaking to the porter at the Green Man and Still — the *homo viridis et tranquillus*, as some

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one has translated it—he told them the box was already taken by Mr. Splinterbars, of Christ Church, a gentleman who was so fond of coaching that he spent all his leisure time in going up and down the road, and was on the most intimate terms with Mr. Costar, the proprietor, and all the jehus in his service, but especially with Mr. Lynchpynne, the driver of " the Blenheim."

Now I, Peter Priggins, though I am speaking of " the Blenheim" in the days of its infancy—many years gone by — beg leave to recommend it now, in the prime of its life, to those gentlemen and ladies who prefer the lingering comforts of a well-horsed and well-conducted stage coach, to the rattling, smoking, steaming, screeching, and stinking annoyances of a railway train, with the risk of an " unexpected meeting" with their friends in the " *up* train," who have by mistake taken the same *line* of travelling as the *down* train. Charles Holmes, the driver, will not fail to show them that civility and attention for which he has been rewarded with a handsome silver cup, subscribed for by his old customers; among whom, the

name of the greatest man of the age is proudly pointed out by the deserving possessor of the splendid tankard.

Ninny and his friend selected "the Blenheim," not so much for its superiority over the other Oxford coaches of that day, as from its being driven by an old Rotherwickian—for such was Lynchpynne. He was of a respectable family, who had sufficient interest with one of the governors of Rotherwick to get him placed on the foundation of that school. He passed through his seven years there creditably and quietly, being notorious for nothing but flanking a team of four fags in hempen harness round the green every day between school-hours, and giving half-a-crown to any one who could neigh as naturally as a coach-horse. Upon governors' days he was observed to select the best appointed carriage; and in driving round Rotherwick Square, to cut in and out and turn the corners more courageously and neatly than any of his competitors. The *meta fervidis evitata rotis* was the goal of all his wishes.

He left school and entered at Oxford with an

exhibition; but, unfortunately, in going down to reside, the coachman trusted him with the reins for three or four stages. He could never rest quiet afterwards, except upon a coach-box or in the stable, and spent all his exhibition in treating coachmen and feeing them to let him drive. His studies were neglected, and hall and chapel cut almost every day. The expostulations, entreaties, and threats of his tutors and friends were all uttered in vain. He was imposed, sconced, and confined to college; but he got his impositions done by the barber, paid his sconces, and got over the college walls after dark to work the Worcester mail one stage out of Oxford and in again every night, though he knew he should be expelled if he were found out.

The tutors were justly incensed by his conduct, and tried every means in their power to detect him, and catch him *in ipso;* but it was no easy matter, for he was such a favourite with all the college servants, and behaved so liberally to them in the buttery, that they wisely thought they should gain a loss if they lost him, and,

when questioned on the subject of his getting out of college at night, "never knowed nothing at all about it." His brother collegians, as a matter of course, admired his spirit too much to betray him, and were highly delighted at his success in "doing the dons." One or two, in a base attempt to imitate him and interfere with the κυδος his determined resistance to the authorities had obtained for him, were caught out the first night, and rusticated accordingly, illustrating the truth of the old proverb, "one man may steal a horse out of a field, though another may not look over the hedge at him."

The truth of another "old saw" was shortly proved, "that an earthen pitcher may go once too often to the well;" for his tutor, finding all his attempts useless to discover Mr. Lynchpynne's "outgoings and incomings" by the agency of the college servants, determined to try a plan of his own. He sent his scout for change for a one-pound note, which, in those days, like foreign ambassadors, were "representatives of a sovereign," and went out of college in what the members of the United Service call *mufti*,

but members of the University *beaver*, which means, not in his academics—his cap and gown. He walked about the regions of "the Angel," and, when the Worcester mail drew up to give the passengers their ten minutes to suffocate themselves in endeavouring to get their *quid pro quo* — supper enough to compensate for three shillings, and sixpence the waiter, he, like Norval, "hovered about the spot, and marked" down the coachman. (Not a bad example that of an *anacoluthon*. P. P.)

"Coachman," said he, stepping up to him, and depositing in his hand ten shillings of the change out of the one-pound note—"I want you to do me a favour."

"Certain*ly*, sir," replied coachey, touching his hat with one hand, and pocketing the money with the other, "any thing to oblige so perfect a gentleman."

"I want you to —— "

"Bring you down a little fish, perhaps; sammun's plentiful, but shrimps is scarce, and you Oxford gentlemen would never think of eating sammun arout shrimps," said coachey, in a gin-

and-water voice, through the folds of three bird's-eye "handkerchers," and the collar of a Witney coat.

"You entirely mistake me," said the tutor: "there is an undergraduate of our college, who acts on the principle *quid libet audendi* — I beg pardon—I mean of running all risks of rustication and expulsion, to indulge his *penchant* — I beg pardon—his — how can I express it? his—*propositi tenacitas* — I really beg your pardon—his insatiable love for driving—*hippocolazing*—I beg pardon—flogging horses; and gets over our walls every night and morning—*mane noctuque* —I beg pardon again—to drive one of the night coaches. You would oblige me greatly by giving me a σημειον—beg pardon again — a hint, a sure hint, by which I might ——"

"Be down upon him, eh?"

"Yes; that is, detect him. What wheeled carriage does he direct?"

"What *what?*" inquired coachey, sending a *jet d'eau* through his teeth. "Oh, you mean what drag does he work!—the Champion — up in ten minutes — look sharp, and you'll be sure

to nab him—right, sir—time up—Bill, tune up your tin, and save the passengers an attack of indigestion." The guard blew his horn. The insides and outs rushed out of the Angel grumbling, with their mouths full, and the coachman mounted the box; and, after assuring the tutor that he should be happy at all times to furnish him with information on the same terms, squared his elbows, and drove off.

Mr. Slink, the tutor, walked up and down the High Street, rubbing his hands from joy at the success of his scheme and the coldness of the night, which at last grew so intense, that he slipped unseen into the coach-office, and sat himself down by the fire, behind a heap of luggage placed ready for stowing on board the Champion. He had not been thus comfortably seated above a minute, when the book-keeper and porter rolled into the office without seeing him, laughing so convulsively as to be obliged to hold their stomachs with both hands, and to raise a leg alternately to save themselves from bursting. Mr. Slink, being in a good humour, enjoyed it very much, and laughed internally.

"Jacobs," said Jack Hutton, in apoplectic tones, "did you ever?"

"No, never!" said Jacobs, and both book-keeper and porter laughed more convulsively than before. "To think his own tutor shouldn't know him!" said Jacobs.

"And to see him take it so *ex-ces-sive* cool! Pocketing the blunt, too—ten bob—to split upon himself," said Jack Hutton.

"And how well he imitated old Spooner's foggy voice," said Jacobs.

"Warn't it well?" said Jack. "And then to let him kick his legs about for an hour in the frost, waiting for the Champion!—Oh—if he'd only jine the perfession—he'd soon get to the top on it!"

"Better set up in the bacon trade," said Jacobs, "he's so good at *gammon*."

At this joke of the book-keeper, of course he and the porter laughed louder than ever. When it was over, between them they fully informed Mr. Slink that Mr. Lynchpynne had not only deceived him, and got his "ten bob," by putting on old Spooner's — the *veritable* Jehu's —

voice and "toggery," after putting the aforesaid Spooner into *his* "upper togs" and the inside of the coach, but had positively sentenced him, Mr. Slink, to exposure to the "wintry wind" for the space of one hour, and was, doubtless, at that moment, entertaining the gentleman on the box of the Worcester mail with an account of his successful *ruse*. Mr. Slink also learnt that he would only drive to Benson, and "tool" the down mail back again; therefore, Mr. Slink slinked out of the coach-office into the coffee-room, and, ordering a mutton-chop and a glass of hot brandy-and-water, told the waiter to let him know when the Worcester mail came in, as he expected a friend by it.

The waiter, who did not know Mr. Slink, did as he was ordered; and Mr. Slink, looking over the blind, saw his *quarry* descend from the box, throw his whip to Jack Hutton and his "upper togs" on the pavement, and, after putting on his own hat and coat, and tossing off the glass of brandy-and-water that was brought out to him by the barmaid as a "regular thing," take the road to college; he, Mr. Slink, having paid

for his creature comforts, and given the disgusted waiter threepence, rushed out and followed his man.

The unconscious Lynchpynne walked deliberately up "Logic Lane," humming

> "With spirits gay I mount the box,
> The tits up to the traces," &c.

until he came to the "Hole-in-the-Wall," by which he gained access to the interior of his college and his own rooms.

"*Per fidem, universitati debitam! siste!*" cried Mr. Slink, catching hold of the skirt of his great-coat.

"Proctor, by Jove!" said Lynchpynne, kicking out behind like a colt in a break, flooring his tutor, and clearing the wall.

The porter, who let Mr. Slink into college, fully believed that he had been larking, and rewarded for so untutorlike an amusement by getting a bloody nose. He did not, of course, dare to demand the cause of the "sanguineous stream," nor did Mr. Slink feel at all inclined to be communicative, but went to his rooms, snuffling to the porter through his blood-stained,

white muslin handkerchief, or nose-kerchief, and ordering him to tell Mr. Lynchpynne to call upon him immediately after chapel in the morning.

This message, and the description of his tutor's appearance, satisfied Mr. Lynchpynne of the impropriety of kicking indiscriminately, and induced him to anticipate his fate, by taking his name off the books *before* chapel on the following morning. He sold his books to purchase a box-coat and a broad-brimmed hat, expended his "thirds" upon top-boots and other "toggery," and laid out the proceeds of his pictures and caricatures upon crops, lashes, and whipcord. He then went down to Mr. Costar, told him how matters stood, and requested employment.

The worthy coach-proprietor "rose at him" at once, and put him *upon* the Blenheim, upon the same principle as his horses were daily put *to* that excellent coach—to *draw* customers. His friends were annoyed—his college disgusted, and the University as a body, as they considered, degraded; entreaties, expostulations, reproaches, and threats were used to induce him to retrace

the rash step he had taken, or at least to try another road— but no! as he said, " he had resigned all his hopes of advancement in life for his favourite occupation, and had mounted the box for *wheel* or *whoah*, he would not get off again for any body, nor would he exchange places, inside or out, with the Lord Chancellor or the Archbishop of Canterbury."

As far as the interests of the " concern" were concerned, the experiment of having a gentleman-coachman was successful; the Blenheim was always full, and the box-seat was a daily half-crown in the porter's pocket. Nor did Mr. Lynchpynne, we believe, ever regret exchanging the conduct of a suit at law for the management of a team of horses; as he was often heard to say, that if any one wanted amusement, there was nothing like a coach for affording " good entertainment for man and horse."

Behind this favourite and highly favoured driver and his intimate friend, Mr. Splinterbars of Christ-Church, Ninny, Compo, and the Cambridge man mounted, and, as soon as they were off the stones and approaching the classic regions

of "the Old Hat" on the Wycombe road, were exceedingly amused at the interest manifested by Mr. Splinterbars in the success of all Mr. Costar's coaches, and his evident knowledge of the private concerns of every driver on the road.

To exemplify this, one short dialogue must suffice.

"You did not see the mails come in this morning, Harry, I suppose?" inquired Mr. Splinterbars. "I went to meet them—Worcester full inside and out — Gloucester three ins and full out, and very good 'bills' for parcels—Black Prince short of passengers — mad woman inside—but heavy load of luggage—six outsides in the hardware line—bad journey for Tom Wiggins; they never give more than sixpence. By-the-by, has Mrs. Wiggins got the better of her nasty temper yet? She is the most vicious woman I know, always kicking over the traces; if I was Tom, I would drive her in a kicking-strap, with a Chifney bit, and double thong her all along the road of life."

"*Dux fœmina facti,*" said Lynchpynne. "He'd better give her her head for a time, and,

when she's inclined to pull up, lay it into her, and stop her allowance of corn. Nothing like short commons and no beans for a spirited one."

" Have you heard how Bill Brown's daughter is, that had the small-pox so bad ?"

" Much to be *pitted*, the doctors say."

" Ah ! ah ! — not so bad, Harry ! I'm very glad to hear that Charlton is done up. Entirely ruined—it serves him right; he had no business to set up an opposition against us."

" Poor fellow !" said Lynchpynne ; " he was right in trying to get an honest living ; the *res angusta domi* drove him to run against us."

" Then he might have begun with a pair," said Mr. Splinterbars, looking unmerciful. "How is Bess, the brown mare, that was lame before ?"

" Not so bad as she pretends to be," said Lynchpynne ; " merely a corn, I suspect, in her near fore-foot ; but she makes out that she is worse than she is, and kicks and bites when they go to examine her. '*Nec se cupit* antè *videri,*' as Virgil says."

Every coach that they met was examined by Mr. Splinterbars—the number of outsides and insides counted, and the probable amount of the carriage of parcels guessed at; nor did he forget to ask every coachman that pulled up every particular concerning the health, wealth, and prosperity of every member of his family — inquiring for every little whipcord by the name which his godfathers and godmothers had given him or her.

The Cambridge man, who sat by the side of Ninny and Compo, did not venture to address either of them, upon the University principle, that you should never open your mouth or do the civils to any man to whom you have not been introduced; though his astonishment at hearing a stage-coachman quote Latin had very nearly induced him to violate so excellent a rule. Ninny and Compo were, of course, rattling away with Lynchpynne about old times at Rotherwick, which only confounded the Cambridge man the more. Now nothing pleased Lynchpynne so much as to astonish a passenger, who did not know his history, by a display of his classical

acquirements. Mr. Splinterbars had often derived considerable amusement from these exhibitions, and at the first stage, where he got down to inquire after the health of a glandered horse, he gave him a hint to " improve the occasion" by victimizing the Cambridge man, whose name, as indicated by the brass plate on his trunk, was Browne.

As soon, therefore, as he had remounted his box, he turned round to Mr. Browne, and inquired if he were going down to Oxford to enter.

" Oh dear, no! I'm a Cambridge man," replied Mr. Browne, looking very superior to Oxford. " I am merely going down to Oxford to see some old schoolfellows—Rugby men—and look at the place."

" Oh, you were a Rugby boy, were you?" said Lynchpynne. " I knew the head-master, Dr. Sheepskin, well—a very clever man he was. We have capped verses together from Oxford to London many a time."

" *You* cap verses with the doctor?" said Mr. Browne. " Come, that is rather *too* good."

"If you doubt my ability," said Lynchpynne, "though I am not much addicted to betting, I'll lay you a mutton chop and half a pint of sherry, at the Red Lion at Wycombe, that I beat you, before we get to Uxbridge, in Greek or Latin, and this gentleman shall be judge," pointing to Mr. Splinterbars, who readily undertook the office of umpire.

"Now then," continued Lynchpynne, "name your language and metre—shall we try a few Greek hexameters? or, as you Cambridge gentlemen think much of Porson, shall we begin with iambics?

'ᾶί, ᾶι· παρέστηχ ὢς ἔοιχ' ἀγὼν μέγας.'

Sigma, sir; now go on."

"Why, really I—that is—if—" stammered Mr. Browne, looking nervous, and very red.

"Were you not among strangers, you would be less unwilling to take up the cudgels; but I think I may venture to introduce you to these gentlemen—Mr. Splinterbars and Mr. Nincompoop of Christ Church, and Mr. Winkey of St. Peter's."

Each of these gentlemen bowed to Browne

as his name was announced, and Browne looked more nervous and redder than before; but to assure them he was not above being on amicable terms with them, he thrust his hand into his pocket, and, pulling out a case, offered Mr. Splinterbars a cigar. The offer was politely declined, and Lynchpynne proceeded to torture his man by calling upon him again for an iambic commencing with a sigma.

"Why, I really—that is—I've no doubt I could—but — it seems so very absurd to cap Greek with a coachman! don't it?" said Browne, appealing to Ninny and Compo, and twiddling his cigar.

"Well! Latin then, if you prefer it," said Lynchpynne, "only it's rather low—all my horse-keepers use it."

"Your horsekeepers talk Latin? that's coming it *too* strong."

"Ay, and Greek too upon Sundays. Why, I would not keep a helper in my stables, who could not do a copy of Latin verses."

"You won't make me believe that without seeing and hearing it," said Browne, looking half offended.

"As your habits are mathematical, you shall have a proof at this public-house, where I will pull up for a glass of ale," said Lynchpynne, stopping at the Magpie and Horse-shoe, and addressing the head ostler thus—"*Heus, puer! Da aquam equis meis, et dic tuo magistro ut cantharum cerevisiæ optimæ per-magnum quam citissimè efferat.*"

The ostler, who received the same order in English every day, washed the horses' mouths out, and told his master to bring out a large jug of best beer.

"*Quod erat demonstrandum,*" said Lynchpynne. "I hope you are satisfied, sir?"

Browne looked queer, but took his turn at the jug as it passed round, to assure himself the order had been understood.

"*Bonum est?*" inquired Lynchpynne.

"*Nullum dubium de illo,*" answered Browne, to show he *could* talk Latin if he liked.

"*Satis superque, mi Gulielmicule,*" cried out Lynchpynne to the ostler, who was known by the name of little Billy, "*habenas refige;*" and little Billy began to "bear up" the horses,

just as if he understood all that was said to him.

As soon as they were off again, Mr. Browne was solicited to comply with Lynchpynne's request; and after resorting to as many doubles and turns as a hare tries in a long course, to avoid making an exhibition of himself, at last was driven to consent, and managed to dig up, out of the shallow soil of his memory, some half dozen Latin lines, implanted there from that excellent nursery, the Eton grammar.

"*Sæpe sinistra cavâ prædixit ab ilice cornix.*"

"Trouble you for an X," said Lynchpynne.

"*Xerxes in Italiam,*" began Mr. Browne.

"Name your author," interrupted Lynchpynne.

Mr. Browne could not, and not having another line ready, lit another cigar, and owned himself conquered.

"You see," said Lynchpynne, "you Cambridge men devote so much of your time to mathematics, and so little to the classics, that though full of Euclid and algebra, conic sec-

tions, and trigonometry, you are apt to forget your Latin and Greek. Now, at Oxford, the reverse is the case; we cherish and keep alive what are considered in other places the dead languages, by insisting on the tradesmen and operatives using them upon all occasions, under the penalty of being put in the stocks if they utter a word of English. As you are going to Oxford, and seem to have forgotten much of your Latin, it would be as well to purchase Valpy's Latin Dialogues when you get to Wycombe, or you will not get any thing to eat and drink, for the waiters at the inns have quite forgotten the vernacular."

Lynchpynne was backed in "cocking him up," as they call hoaxing a man at Rotherwick, by Mr. Splinterbars, Ninny and Compo, who, with very grave faces corroborated every lie he told, affirming that they, used as they were to talk Latin, had been often put to great inconvenience to translate off-hand the pure Ciceronian of their scouts.

When they arrived at Wycombe, Browne was reminded of his bet, and requested to take a

share of the lunch, but he declined leaving the coach — politely requesting Ninny to tell the waiter to bring him out a biscuit and a glass of ale. This the waiter did, and being properly prepared by the hoaxers, replied to Browne's question, "*Quam multum?*" "*Tres denarios, et quid vis pro servo.*"

Browne gave him sixpence in fear and trembling, and determined not to open his mouth again until he got to Oxford, where he meant to hire an interpreter.

The joke was carried on with praiseworthy gravity, and Mr. Browne's feelings were wrought up to such a pitch of intensity when they got to Headington Hill, and Oxford, in all its beauties, burst upon his sight, that he leant forward and whispered to Lynchpynne—

"Mr. Coachman—I really am—that is, I am not — quite so ready with my Latin as I ought to be—want of practice—nothing else. Now I'll give you an extra half-crown if you'll set me down at some little public-house outside the University, where they can understand English. Do now, there's a good fellow."

"I am very sorry I can't oblige you, sir," said Lynchpynne, "but the precincts of the University extend five miles round the city, and we are within a mile of it now, where English is entirely exploded; try your dog Latin, however, and perhaps the under-waiter may be able to guess at your meaning."

Browne felt ill and wretched; and, if an up-coach came in sight, made up his mind to get upon it and go back to London. Nothing of the kind appearing, he occupied the few minutes left to him between Marston Lane and the Angel, in making up a few sentences to insure him a dinner and bed, and in getting ready his fare and half-crown for the coachman. The moment the coach stopped he sprung off it and ran into the house, saying to the porter as he passed, "*Infer meum truncum*," which Jack Hutton did, being more intelligibly directed to do so by Lynchpynne, who, with the rest of the conspirators, was enjoying the miseries of the hoaxee immensely.

When Browne was ushered into the coffee-room by the waiter, he turned round, and in a

very bold tone inquired, "*Quid est pro prandio?*"

"*Domme!*" said the waiter, scratching his head.

Which Mr. Browne thought was short for *domine*, so he varied his question and said,

"*Id est, quid habes in domo edere et bibere?*"

"Can't say I understand furrin languidges, sir," said the waiter, shaking his head mysteriously.

"Why, you speak English!" cried Browne.

"In course I do," said the waiter.

"My dear fellow! give me your hand — I'm so delighted to think I should light on the only man in Oxford who can speak English."

"What do you mean?" said the waiter, reluctantly taking Browne's offered hand in his, round the thumb of which a neat, white napkin was twisted, ready to bring in the first dish.

"Why you are all liable to be put in the stocks, ain't you, if you don't talk Latin? so the coachman told me."

"Oh I see, sir," said the waiter, "you came

down with Mr. Lynchpynne, and he's been at his old tricks,

'All to astonish the Brownes,'

as the song says."

An explanation ensued, in which the early history of Lynchpynne fully accounted for his classical lore, and Mr. Browne, fearing to be pointed at as he walked the streets, as the Cambridge man who couldn't talk Latin, made a very bad dinner, and returned to London by the first coach.

Compo and Ninny gave Lynchpynne a very good dinner at the Mitre, and then went to supper with Tom Velox at St. Mark's, which, of course, was made digestible by sundry jugs of nightcaps; no excess, however, was committed; and Dennis, on their return to their inn, where they meant to sleep that night, seeing they were too sober, strongly recommended a little pale brandy and cold water; and Ninny, having found his recipes so successful on former occasions, submitted without a murmur to a succession of glasses for himself and friend, until the two candles and every article of furniture in the

room seemed to have doubles of themselves. Dennis then recommended one more glass each, which he knew he should have to drink for them, and sent in the under-waiter and boots to assist the chambermaid in getting them to bed.

CHAPTER XVI.

On the following morning Ninny and Compo parted, the former under the guidance of the porter at the Mitre, and the effects of the nocturnal overdose of cold without—a shocking bad headache—for his rooms in Canterbury quad, and the latter, under the impression that Dennis was the "*medicorum facile princeps*," and an erroneous notion, that he had made a right honourable his friend for life, for his rooms in St. Peter's.

As Ninny was crossing the High Street, and taking the nearest cut to Canterbury Gate, down Oriel Lane, he met three old Rotherwickians, arm in arm, with whom he had been on intimate terms when at school, and was not a little surprised to find his hearty salutation, "Hilloh! old fellows! how are you all?" responded to by

a very stiff bow from one, and a stare of horrified indignation from the others. As they passed on without taking any further notice of him, he felt very much inclined to follow them, and demand the reason of their giving him the cut direct, and if the reason did not prove satisfactory, to treat them as he had often done at school — give them a "good licking." As he stood gazing at them with flashing eyes and flushed cheeks, the porter, who had seen the whole affair, and from long practice in Oxford matters easily guessed the meaning of it, said to him,

"Old schoolfellows, sir, I suppose?"

"Yes," replied Ninny, "intimate friends, that I've licked many a time, and I'll follow and lick them again now for daring to cut me in this way."

"Excuse me, sir," said the porter, setting down his luggage-barrow directly across the pavement, so as to block up the passage, "but it's all your own fault; you're fresh, and not up to 'varsity *hetticut*."

"To what?" inquired Ninny.

" Hetticut, sir. You see when a gen'elman first comes up he musn't speak to nobody as doesn't speak to him first. They sits in their rooms for a week to receive calls, and then goes out and returns them. That's what they calls *hetticut.*"

" That may be the case with strangers," said Ninny, " but it's too absurd for old cronies at school."

" It's the hetticut, sir, I assure you," said the porter, applying his straps to the handle of the barrow, and proceeding towards Christ Church, " and hetticut must be observed. Of course you've heard the old story about one gen'elman as wouldn't save another gen'elman from drowning, becos ' he'd never been interduced ?' "

Ninny shook his head negatively.

" Haven't you ? Well, it's a *fact*, that's all. The 'varsity crowner held an inquest on the body, and told the jury, that though the gen'elman might have saved him by merely stretching out his hand, yet the hetticut of the 'varsity forbid any gen'elman to take any other gen'elman by the hand to whom he hadn't been regu-

lar interduced, and so they must bring it in accidental death; which they accordingly did, and clapped a deodand of £5. *5s.* on Stephen Davis's skiff, for upsetting a 'varsity gen'elman."

As Ninny smiled incredulously, the porter continued,

"It's a fact, sir, I knows it is; for though I didn't see it myself, it's been so well known for the last fifty years it must be true. It's a tradition as is handed down as a heirloom. But I'll tell you what I once saw with my own eyes. It was one rainy night as I was coming home from running up with the boats. I was just got upon the Folly Bridge, where the water's nigh twenty foot deep, when I saw a gen'elman, as I knew was the Honble Mr. Clencher, of St. Peter's, fall into the water, in trying to land from his skiff. As he was above the bridge, where there was not any punts, and I saw by the way as he kicked and struggled as Mr. Clencher couldn't swim, I ran round by the towing-path gate, meaning to jump in after him and have him out. Before I got to him, however, a gen'el-

man had thrown off his coat and waistcoat, and was just leapt in to save him. He drew him to shore, and I landed him, more frightened than hurt. Well, you never seed a man so grateful in your life. He called him his preserver, and all manner of names, and swore he'd never forget his kindness. Well, the gen'elman as saved him took him, all dripping wet as he was, to one of the barges, where he kept his rowing-dresses, and lent him a suit to go home dry in, and this made him more grateful nor before. Next day they meets in High Street, but Mr. Clencher walked straight on, keeping his eyes steadily fixed on the weathercock upon St. Mary's steeple, and never said, 'how do you do?' even."

"He did not see his preserver, of course?" inquired Ninny.

"Just as plain as I sees you, sir; but he had found out from his servant as he was only a servitor of Christ Church, and it ain't the hetticut for tufts to associate with sich. *That's* a fact, at any rate."

This tale and the wheelbarrow arrived at

their respective goals at the same moment, and Ninny found his rooms in readiness for his reception, through the exertions of my friend Broome, and Mr. Higgins, the private tiger, who had been hired and sent down by Lord Wastepaper, a few days before, for the express purpose. With the exception of their redolency of paste and fresh paint, the apartments were very desirable. The furniture which had been thirded from the last occupant, a quiet reading man, was in a good state of preservation. The looking-glass was not even cracked, and the chairs and tables still had their legitimate complement of legs and arms. The only articles that appeared to have been used were a large reading-chair, a still larger reading-table, and an immense copper teakettle; which may be accounted for by the fact, that Ninny's predecessor was not only studious, but stingy, and never gave a party.

Ninny had but sufficient time to take a cursory view of his new abode, for ten o'clock was fast approaching, at which hour he was to accompany his tutor to the Vice-Chancellor's, to be

matriculated; a ceremony that requires but a short time, yet costs a considerable deal of money. He next called upon the Dean, Dr. Pertinax Plotter, by whom he was not so graciously received as he would have been, had Lord Wastepaper been able to secure him an opportunity of saying "*nolo episcopari*," upon the death of the lamented Right Rev., &c. &c., the Bishop of Blank, who had been succeeded by a Cambridge man, though it was the "Oxford turn." Still his manner was not ungracious, though distant, as Dr. ——, the Bishop of ——, was any thing but well, and there were two dignitaries on his "list," whose health was on the decline.

After Ninny had taken his leave, it probably occurred to the Dean that he had not been so obliging and attentive to his patron's *protégé* as the chances of preferment indicated by his "list" demanded, for, soon after he reached his rooms, Ninny received a note to this effect :—

"The Dean will be happy to see the Honourable A. N. Nincompoop at breakfast to-

morrow, at ten o'clock, and introduce him to a few of his best men.

"Deanery, Christ Church,

"May 5th."

To which Ninny, who had made all the proper arrangements with his friend Compo, replied—

"Mr. Nincompoop's compliments to the Dean, and is sorry he cannot breakfast with him to-morrow morning, at ten o'clock, as he is going to Woodstock in a tandem at half-past nine, but will keep himself disengaged for the following day."

Now as the Dean allowed his men to hunt and drive buggies as often as they pleased, but positively set his rubicund face against the dangerous and unstatutable practice of tandem driving, he was highly and justly offended at the receipt of this note; but the Bishop of ——, he found by his letters which had just arrived, in the interim of the note's being sent and answered, was *in articulo*, he merely sent a message by Broome, to intimate that the "leader

ought to be sent on," and that the following morning, at ten, would suit him equally well for seeing Mr. Nincompoop at breakfast. Although this may be considered judicious on the part of the Dean, as far as not losing a chance of succeeding to the Bishop of ——, who was so decidedly vacating his see, yet some cavillers might think that it would not impress upon the mind of the *novus homo*, the freshman, that respect for college dignitaries, which ought to be the *primum mobile* of every man's thoughts, words, and deeds, as long as he is in the university.

Ninny sat in his rooms, and began to think a college life an exceedingly dull one, and wished he might reverse the order of things, and go and call on some of his old friends first; but the hint given him about " 'varsity hetticut" by the porter at the Mitre was not lost upon him, and he resolved to act upon it, and not commit himself any further. What was he to do until dinner time, when he had promised to meet Compo at Tom Velox's rooms at St. Mark's, and dine in hall? He never could read,

and as to walking out by himself he abhorred it. At last a lucky thought struck him.

"Higgins!"

"Sir," replied that well-made, well-dressed, and well-conducted tiger, who was occupied in arranging his new master's dressing-case and clothes in the bedroom.

"Higgins, do you know any thing about setting-to?"

"A little, sir. My governor keeps a sporting-ken in Tothill Fields, and has a long room where the gentlemen of the fancy take their benefits," replied Higgins, looking very knowing.

"Capital, by George!" cried Ninny, in an ecstasy. "Go out and get a gallon of London porter, and two pairs of gloves somewhere. Here's a note—pay for them, and bring me the change."

Broome very properly prevented so unusual and improper a mode of proceeding as paying ready money for any thing, and the gloves were procured from old Quarterman's in the corn-market, on tick, and a set of foils and single-sticks, with masks complete, from Messrs. Loder and Gunner, upon the same terms.

In less than one hour after Mr. Nincompoop's name was entered on the books of the above-mentioned respectable tradesmen, the little letter-box affixed to his "oak" was crammed to suffocation with cards and notes from wine-merchants, pastrycooks, tailors, bootmakers, and all sorts of tradesmen, soliciting the honour of the honourable gentleman's orders: so admirably is the system of "telegraphing" managed at the University. I doubt whether the adoption of the new electro-magnetic apparatus would be an improvement on the old plan by which I have known the news of Mr. Jones of Jesus having "come up to pay his ticks" or *chalks*, circulated amidst his tickers in half an hour; and what is more surprising is, that every one of these tickers knew by instinct that out of the innumerable series of Joneses of Jesus who come in and go out every year like "hardy annuals," this individual, Jones, was the very man on *his* books. *Nacitur non fit propola Oxoniensis;* which is the only way of accounting for his superior discrimination, and intuitive readiness in getting the earliest possible intelligence of

every man's "coming up," who is likely to favour him with money or orders.

While these choice specimens of the genus sufferer were employed in leaving their cards in Mr. Nincompoop's oak, that gentleman was amusing himself by sparring with Higgins, who was very much astonished, and still more disgusted, to find that his new master was not only so theoretically, but also practically acquainted with the arcana of the sublime science of boxing as to be more than a match for himself. Astonished, I say, because he had never seen him at his governor's long room, and disgusted because his merciful determination not to knock his master down before the *last* round was not likely to be appreciated as it ought. Moreover, Higgins had been *Alnascharizing*—building *chateaux en Espagne*—ever since he had been engaged by Lord Wastepaper.

Among the aerial edifices which he had been erecting in his ardent imagination, the most pleasing was a public-house, or sporting-crib, at the west-end, with a snug bar, furnished with the "choicest wines, spirits, and other com-

pounds," and a very pretty barmaid—a parlour fitted with every convenience for conviviality, and its walls adorned with portraits of eminent prize-fighters, from the remote ages of Humphryes and Mendoza up to the present time; and a long room of extraordinary dimensions, suitable for private tuition and public dinners. The sum required for the purchase of the lease and good-will of these cloudy but desirable premises was to be made up in a very short time from the savings of his wages, and by giving lessons in boxing at half-a-guinea an hour to his master and all his acquaintances. This visionary *locale* for the enjoyment of his "*opium cum dignitate*," as Dusterly will insist upon miscalling it, was, like himself, effectually floored the very first round by a severe facer, put in so scientifically as to convince the receiver, Mr. Higgins, that the person who could administer such a straight hit from the shoulder needed none of his instructions. As he was no logician, and argued from particulars to universals, he drew the faulty inference, that, because his master was a proficient in the art of boxing, all

the members of the University must be equally skilful in pugnacity.

The stimulus of the exercise, and several very large tankards of Barclay and Perkins, which Broome persevered in importing from the buttery, removed the headache and lowness of spirits under which Ninny had been suffering all the morning. The stomach and the muscles of his body, by a wonderful sympathy, like a newly-tuned pianoforte, recovered their *tone* together. The sets-to, or set-tos—for I know not which is correct, without referring to the classical columns of a sporting paper — became more animated, and in the last round Higgins received a blow, which sent him from the middle to the end of the room, where he fell and lay deprived of consciousness, from his head coming into collision with the sharp edge of the fender.

Ninny was showing his sorrow for the accident, and his inherent humanity towards a fallen foe, by recovering him from his lethargy with copious applications of brown stout, "exhibited" over his head and face by the aid of his neckcloth, which was the only *succedaneum* for a sponge within his master's reach.

In this charitable and interesting situation, Ninny was discovered by Mr. Eugenius Eupheme, the senior tutor, who had called to do the civils and usuals to his honourable pupil, and had gained access to his rooms, through the incautiousness of Broome, who had forgotten to sport oak, in his eagerness to get " one more" tankard of porter before the buttery was closed.

Mr. Eupheme gazed in mute surprise upon the extraordinary *tableau* (I was going to add *vivant* which would have been wrong, as the principal figure was temporarily defunct) presented to his eyes. Seeing a person on the ground apparently dead, and his honourable pupil covered with blood himself, and mopping the dead man's face, he became alarmed, and, rushing *down* the staircase, *up* which Broome was carefully climbing with the last tankard, for fear of injuring its cauliflower head, ran against him in turning the corner, and the three rolled together to the bottom of the staircase. The tutor was saturated with porter, which Broome very much regretted, as the buttery was shut,

and no more could be obtained until dinner-time.

"Waste not thy valuable time on me, Mr. Broome," said Mr. Eupheme, looking benevolent, and warding off the pocket-handkerchief with which my friend was going to wipe away the frothy stains of the brown stout; "but hasten and procure the immediate attendance of a medical practitioner."

"What, cut along and get a doctor, sir? No occasion for that—it's merely Mr. Nincompoop, the new tuft, setting-to with his tiger. He suffers from indigestion, and the doctors recommend strong exercise, and ——."

"Brown stout?" inquired Mr. Eupheme, dispossessing his mouth and eyes of a considerable quantity of that liquid.

"Yes, sir," replied Broome; "there's a great deal of steel in it, and it makes 'em as hard as flints."

This, of course, was all pure invention on the part of my friend Broome, and, *out* of Oxford, would be unquestionably denominated a lie. *In* Oxford, however, expediency is the fundamen-

tal principle of our policy; and a scout, like a member of parliament, is not worth a farthing, who is not ready with "a reply."

Mr. Eupheme swallowed the invention with several addenda that were absolutely necessary to give the little fiction a colouring of reality, and reascended the stairs. On entering the room he found Ninny putting on his clothes, and Higgins sitting against the wainscot sobbing convulsively, and looking excessively bewildered. His rolling eyeballs betrayed the confused state of his thoughts, which were a sort of amalgam formed of a mixture of rage, pain, disappointment, premeditated revenge, and a sulky kind of respect for the respectable college dignitary before him.

From this unpleasant state Broome relieved him by carrying him into his master's bedroom, and tying up his bleeding head with a silk handkerchief well soaked in the "best white-wine vinegar," manufactured from stale table-beer.

Mr. Eupheme, to his pupil's great surprise, "begged to express his sincere and deep regret at his being compelled by the faculty to resort to such strong measures to rid himself of that pain-

ful and distressing disorder, dyspepsia," and then commenced a learned exposition of his views of a course of college-reading. He next recommended and wrote down a list of a few books necessary for the commencement of the course, advising Ninny to purchase the best and newest editions, as a groundwork for the foundation of a well-selected classical library.

As the list contained a hundred and fifty books, of whose existence he was before ignorant, Ninny was quite dismayed, and wondered how he, who had not read through six books in the seven years he had passed at Rotherwick, was to skim through or even turn over the leaves of so many in one term. He felt sick of college by anticipation, and began to regret that he had not urged Lord Wastepaper to procure him a commission in the army, where he should have no reading, and nothing to do but to walk about arm-in-arm with his brother officers, smoke cigars, and kick stones into the river from the bridge of the country town in which his regiment might happen to be quartered.

Mr. Eupheme, too, alarmed him by talking,

as he was wont, over-learnedly, and making use of the longest and most carefully-compounded words in his vocabulary, rigidly adhering to the quantity of each in its original language.

He talked of Ovid's metamorphōses — the encyclopedīa—illātive conversion—dătive, accusātive, vocātive, and ablātive cases; and astonished Ninny quite as much as he once did the college-gardener by ordering him to sow plenty of *convolvuli majores.*

Poor Borecole scratched his head and declared, "he never had heard of sich a flower; there was *volvilus majers* and *volvilus miners,* but no sich things as *volvili jores,* he was sartain."

After concluding this "little prospectus of his views for the gradual development of the mental energies," and giving a short exposition of his notions of "academīcal discipline," Mr. Eupheme kindly shook his pupil by the hand and left him in a positive state of mental misery, from which he tried to relieve himself by whistling *dulce domum* out of tune, until the tears ran down his cheeks.

Just as he was pondering on the expediency of

ridding himself of his miseries by committing suicide or running away from college, a rat-tat-tat at his door roused him, and "come in," uttered in a tone of deep despondency closely resembling a groan, introduced his former acquaintance and schoolfellow, the Honourable Peregrine Tittleback, who had come up to put on his bachelor's gown, and hearing of Ninny's arrival and having nothing else to do, resolved to amuse himself by astonishing the weak mind of our hero by his superior attainments in college and worldly matters.

Mr. Tittleback, after getting through his great-go by a shave, had spent a whole month in London, and, upon the strength of having dined once with "an officer in the guards," danced with a *femme passée* at Almack's, and betted five pounds upon the Derby, fancied himself "a man about town," and "up to all the newest dodges."

It is almost needless to say he wore his bachelor's gown, because no man who has accomplished the difficult task of getting his B. A. degree can persuade himself to appear without

the bit of silk or bombazine, with full, long sleeves, which indicates his success, for the first week or ten days after he has put it on.

Ninny, who was not yet acquainted with the different gowns which mark rank and degree in the University, thought that the stylish gentleman in a rich twilled silk bachelor was a don of no ordinary importance, and salaamed him very respectfully, which made him appear much more amiable in the eyes of his visitor. He fixed his gold eye-glass scientifically beneath his upper eyelid, and extended one finger of his right hand with a gracious "Ah, Nincompoop! how are ye?" which was then considered "the correct thing."

"I beg pardon," said Ninny, not accepting the proffered finger for fear of displaying too great familiarity to a don; "I really cannot—"

"Recognize an old schoolfellow in a man of the world—eh? Why, really a few years, a diligent attention to personal embellishment, and the habits and manners acquired in good London society, do make a very considerable alteration for the better," said Tittleback, raising his eye-

lash, and allowing the eye-glass to fall gracefully upon his waistcoat. "You recollect the Honourable Peregrine Tittleback at Rotherwick?"

"Certainly," said Ninny, shaking the proffered finger very gently, for he still doubted whether the person before him, and who stood about five feet eight, was the same whom, as a boy at school, he used to fancy a "regular strapper," and whom he, being rather above than under six feet, now o'ertopped by some four or five inches.

"You must dine with me to-day at my lodgings," continued Tittleback; "you'll not meet a noisy party—that's not the correct thing—only Lord Balamson—you know he's heir apparent to the dukedom of Scratchback—and the Marquis of Rattlebones — his governor married an actress of all work, and improved the noble breed by the injudicious cross. You will make a fourth, and we can have a little chicken-hazard or hookey. You need not stake more than ponies if not convenient. By the bye, is your book full for the Derby? Spiderlegs is first

favourite, and, if you want to hedge, I'll get a friend to take the odds against him."

"I am sorry to say," replied Ninny, blushing as deeply as if he was committing a great sin, or saying something improper, "that I do not understand betting—as yet."

"Never mind—I'll give you the office—you must come up to town—that's the correct thing—but you must not let Balamson and Rattlebones know that you don't bet, it's positively not the correct thing. We dine at seven, and my lodgings are at Snuggins's, in High Street—an everlasting ticker and no mistake."

"I am sorry I cannot accept your invite," said Ninny; "for I am engaged to dine with Tom Velox, at St. Mark's, with my friend Compo."

"Velox? Compo? Who the devil are *they?*"

"Old Rotherwickians. You must remember them."

"My dear Nincompoop! We men about town have too many engagements to allow us to remember any one below a peer or a commoner with an infinity of tin. Velox? Velox? Haven't

the remotest recollection of such a man ; and, as to Compo, I never heard such a devilish odd title in my life—what are they ?"

"Capital good fellows," said Ninny ; "regular bricks, I can tell you."

"You mistake me," said Tittleback ; "I mean are they visitable — that is, gentlemen commoners ?"

"Why, Tom Velox is a scholar of St. Mark's, and Compo is a commoner of St. Peter's, and both are gentlemanly fellows," said Ninny.

"Fellows ! Men, you mean. None of the men are called fellows in Oxford, unless they have got fellowships, and devilish snug things they are for the indigent middle classes. But you must cut both these men — it won't do to associate with them—it's decidedly *infra dig.*"

Ninny, besides being really attached to his old schoolfellows—especially Compo—was too good-natured to hurt the feelings of any one, and felt unwilling to comply with Tittleback's suggestions. That gentleman, however, instead of resorting to argument to convince Ninny of the impropriety of associating with out-college men

beneath the grade of gentlemen commoners, very coolly sat down and wrote a couple of notes in his name to Velox and Compo, which he despatched by Broome, intimating to both those gentlemen, that in future all further intimacy between them must cease, as not being "the correct thing."

Ninny, when the notes were read over to him, was indignant and inclined to refuse sending them, but, being cursed with an inability to say "No"—an impotency of negation, as my friend the professor expresses it—he allowed Tittleback to have his own way.

Tom Velox took no notice whatever of the insolent conduct of Ninny. Winkey, however, who had been boasting all the morning to every man to whom he had been introduced of his extraordinary intimacy with his honourable friend, Nincompoop of Christ-Church, was so exceedingly galled, that he wrote to his governor, and that respectable elderly gentleman expostulated with Lord Wastepaper on the subject: but, finding his expostulations unattended to, he inflicted the severest punishment he could

upon his former patron, by not only refusing to insert his "few little remarks" as usual, but by not even abusing him, in *The Scarifier*.

As Compo Winkey will not come upon the stage again, it will be as well to mention here, that, after a rather successful career at college, and, being called to the bar by virtue of having eaten sundry commons in Lincoln's Inn, he succeeded his father as editor and proprietor of *The Scarifier*, and wrote a weekly leader, the tendency of which was decidedly anti-aristocratic and bitterly abusive of the family of the Fuddleheads, which was lugged in upon all occasions, without the slightest regard to relevancy.

Fortunately for the Fuddleheads, he did not confine his abuse to that honourable family, but extended it to an Irish gentleman, who ventured to differ with him in politics, threatening to beat him as Punch does Judy in the show, and in consequence received so severe a drubbing with an "iligant little bit of an oaken plant," as caused his exit

"From this world of woe."

The Irish gentleman, fancying himself a bit

of a poet, and willing to make the dead man some compensation for the untoward "little bit of a blow" he gave him, wrote what he was pleased to term his *epithet*, thinking to immortalize him. It ran thus:

> "Here Winkey lies, who always lied of yore,
> And though it may look like a paradox,
> He must lie on, though he can lie no more,
> Lying 'cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd,' within his box."

I, Peter Priggins, am no great judge of poetry, but it strikes me that this effort of the Irish muse is not very complimentary. Mrs. P. does not regard it in a serious light, but says it is a mere *Judy's spree.*

Ninny dined with Tittleback and his friends, Balamson and Rattlebones, with whom he was much pleased, as they were fast men, and, though still undergraduates, had seen a great deal of life. Balamson was a live racing calendar, and knew the dam and sire of every horse, mare, and colt in the United Kingdom, and could tell you the "names, weights, and colours of their riders." He got good and early information from the different racing-stables, and

was on very intimate terms of friendship with old John Day, Isaac Sadler, and other tiptop trainers. He had a share in one or two promising colts, and made up a pretty good book in a small way. He meditated great things as soon as he should be emancipated from college and paternal discipline, and come in for a considerable sum of ready money, which he was to do at twenty-five years of age ; indeed, the height of his ambition and the subject of all his daydreams was to be the owner of Eclipse No. 2. He kept a tolerable stud up at Oxford, and hunted regularly six days a week during the season. In the summer terms he got up a few sweepstakes and hurdle-races, which came off in Port Meadow or Bullingdon Green, until the authorities interfered, when the scene was changed to the remoter regions of Abingdon or Cotsford racecourses.

Rattlebones, though he hunted and made up a betting-book, was more celebrated for athletics and mischief. He was a great shot, both at the trap and across country ; kept a kennel of high-couraged, galloping pointers, and notoriously

good, mute, short-legged spaniels. He had also a choice collection of terriers, who rivalled the celebrated Billy in annihilating rats and drawing badgers. In boxing, wrestling, fencing, single-stick playing, rowing, cricketing, running, leaping, and other gymnastics, he greatly excelled, and could spur and handle a cock as cleverly as Charley Eastup himself. As for mischief, nothing from a window-fastening up to a weathercock was safe within a mile of him. He was strongly suspected of being the person who sawed off a very tall and graceful maypole, which was erected at Nettlebed, and furnished with a handsome brass-plate in commemoration of some great victory achieved by a neighbouring gentleman.

Dusterly says, I shall be accused of showing up some marquis of the present day under the name of Rattlebones, but I beg distinctly to deny it, and to assure him in particular, and the public in general, that no *young* marquis of these days was *invented* at the time of which I am writing.

One little bit of mischief I must relate, it was

so admirably conceived and executed, and the moral it was intended to convey was so unexceptionable.

Fisherton, a little town about twenty-five miles from Oxford, was a favourite resort of Rattlebones, on account of the facilities it afforded for indulging in the elegant and interesting amusement of flyfishing. The river, which abounds in trout, for two miles below the town is, or was, rented by the landlord of *the* inn, for the town boasts of but one; and any gentleman, upon the payment of a mere trifle for a ticket, might indulge his propensities for whipping, and fancy himself Xerxes flogging the Hellespont.

Rattlebones threw a fly beautifully; it lighted on the water as lightly as the natural ephemeral it was intended to represent, and no trout, with aldermanic propensities, could resist "rising" to pay his respects to it. At Whitsuntide, when the mayfly is generally up, he used to spend the two days' vacation, which divides the Easter from the Act term, at the Red Lion at Fisherton; and although he was successful in filling his creel and thinning the river, he was a welcome guest

with the landlord, in consequence of the liberal manner in which he paid his bills without examining the items. This landlord, Tom Drainer, was a civil and obliging fellow; but he had, as most of us have, one fault—one favourite sin. He got drunk every night—which many landlords do; but then he beat his wife—which most landlords do *not* do; "The gray mare," as Dusterly says, "being generally the better oss." Of this fault, Rattlebones, who pitied the meek and pretty Mrs. Drainer, whose eyes were too dark to require any additional blackness from her husband's fists, was determined to cure him; and thus the cure was effected.

In the suburbs of Fisherton dwelt one Aminadab Pipkins, a short, stumpy, stunted homuncule, who, as he expressed it, had "retiwed from London to enjoy the wuwalities of the countwy for the wemainder of his life." In a close court in the city, which, though small, was a great thoroughfare, he had rapidly realized a large fortune by manufacturing soups and alamode beef, to which his customers were enticed by a display of salads, quite irresistible in the musty,

fusty, dusty climate of the east. In his window, amidst a bed of purely-bleached curled endive, nestled lettuces of enormous growth, mustard and cress of the true emerald tint, celery tastefully twisted into the most picturesque forms, and gracefully decorated with strings of the deep red beetroot. Under the little card that announced the presence of "real mock turtle," was the head of a large calf with the skin on, that had evidently committed suicide in attempting to swallow an enormous lemon which he still retained between his teeth, as an *ex-post-facto* evidence of his crime. By the aid of these enticing baits, he got his customers to bite so freely that, as he said, "he was a *kining* of money all day long." After having "kined" sufficient to justify him in exchanging the odours of *alamode* for the perfume of the violet, and the foul atmosphere of London for the pure air of the Berkshire downs, he disposed of the lease and goodwill of the soup-shop, and purchased the cottage in the suburbs of Fisherton.

Here he displayed his taste by dismantling the ivy, roses, jasmines, and honeysuckles, with

which the porch, walls, and windows were covered, and substituting in their place formal latticework, upon which he trained scarlet-runners and nasturtiums, as he said, "to make the pwopewty mowe pwofitable." The shrubs, which grew in natural profusion and luxuriance, were rooted up and replaced by straight, round, and three-cornered beds filled with cabbages, and edged with mustard and cress, parsley and spinage.

But his great delight was in plaister "staties" painted *au naturel*. There were *the* Duke and his great rival, Charles Fox and Mr. Pitt, stuck in the middle of a patch of savoys or winter-stuff, and in the midst of all

> "The heathen gods and goddesses so fair,
> Bold Neptin, Vanes, and Nicodamus,
> All standing naked in the open air;"

as says "the Groves of Blarney." But his *pet* statue was a leaden one of Diana, as large as life, which he had the luck to pick up at a glazier's in Fisherton, and upon which he lavished a great deal of money for a sign-painter

to represent her with rosy cheeks, bright blue eyes, and flowing black hair. He was so satisfied with her appearance, that he had her placed as near as possible to his gate that she might attract the passers-by, and secure the admiration which she, in his estimation, merited. She was certainly a lioness with all the school-children, who came from every village round to admire "Pipkins's pretty lady."

Rattlebones had often gazed with a mischievous eye on this Diana, and was determined to have her He stood gazing at, and pretending to be lost in admiration of her while old Pipkins was walking among his cabbages, and, as he passed the gate, raised his hat politely, and begged as a great favour that he might be permitted to enter the garden and examine so classical an image more closely. Pipkins was delighted; he not only admitted Rattlebones, but insisted upon getting out two chairs and a table, and treating him with a bottle of ginger-pop while he admired her at his leisure. This was all the marquis wanted, and he returned to the Red Lion determined to put into execution a scheme he had thought of the night before.

Tom Drainer, who was about three-parts drunk, was summoned to receive orders for supper; and after supper invited in to talk of the favourite holds for the heaviest fish, the favourite throws, and other matters in which anglers delight. He was well supplied with brandy-and-water by Rattlebones's servant, and, in fact, made more drunk than usual. At last he fell from his chair, and was carefully laid upon a sofa, where he was left to recover from his inebriety.

About two o'clock in the morning Tom awoke, and wondered where he was, and where the deuce his wife, and the candle, and the bar, and the bottles and glasses were. He scratched his head, until the titillation brought to his mind all the events of the evening, and he resolved to go up stairs and give Mrs. Drainer "a good hiding" for not having him put to bed as usual. He groped his way to the bar, and finding his favourite chastiser—a large ashen stick—stumbled up stairs with it, and, pulling aside the curtains, put certain queries, in very strong language, to the lady in bed, to which he obtained no answers.

"——— You won't speak, won't ye? Then take that," said Tom; and after applying the stick till he was tired, and surprised at his wife's not alarming the house, as she usually did, he uttered two or three very satisfactory oaths at her obstinacy, and undressed himself and got into bed. Just as he was falling off to sleep, it occurred to him that he ought to make his wife beg his pardon, and, as the readiest way of ensuring her obedience, he sat up in bed, and taking as good an aim at her eye as he could in the dark, struck her a tremendous blow. He was surprised to find that his knuckles seemed to suffer more than his wife's face, and putting out his hand to feel for her nose, to try if that feature were more tender, he was dreadfully alarmed to find her face as cold as ice, and quite stiff; his hands, too, were all wet with a thick clammy substance, and it occurred to him all at once that he must have murdered her with the stick. The fright and horror of such a crime quite sobered him; and, after a few minutes of horrible hesitation how to act, he resolved to go down stairs and procure a light. His horror

was considerably increased at seeing, by the light of the match, his hands and the sleeve of his shirt completely covered with blood. He rushed up stairs, and there he found the pillow, sheets, and the face of his victim, one mass of gore. He fell upon his knees, and called upon his dear wife, in all the endearing terms he could muster; then he rose and walked up and down the room, meditating, in horrible agony of mind, upon what was best to be done. He suddenly resolved to carry the body down and bury it in the brewhouse, but, upon trying to lift it, found it too heavy for his strength, and it fell on the floor rigid and inflexible. He then determined to run for a doctor, and tell him his wife had broken a bloodvessel, or tumbled out of bed, or some other falsehood; but just as he was going to the door for the purpose, he was alarmed at hearing footsteps upon the stairs, and still more so at seeing his door opened, and the marquis and his servant enter. He fell upon his knees and confessed his crime at once, begging and entreating them not to give him up into the hands of justice. A constable was,

however, sent for, and he was handcuffed and placed in the cage in the centre of Fisherton for the night.

It is needless to say that he passed a night of sleepless misery. He went through, in imagination, his examination, committal, trial and execution. He heard the people congregating in the morning round the cage, and he was afraid of being torn to pieces by a justly-enraged mob. As the shouts approached nearer and nearer, his agony increased; but when the key was applied to the lock to open the door that would expose him to the view and execration of thousands, his agony increased to such a degree that he fainted. Upon recovering from his fit, he was surprised to find himself seated on a sort of platform, which was carried by half-a-dozen men, by the side of "old Pipkins's pretty lady," with her face smudged over with red-ochre, and dressed in the nightgear of his wife, who, alive and well, was walking at the head of the procession with the marquis, bearing in her hand the identical ashen stick with which he fancied he had murdered her the night before. Amidst

the jeerings, hootings, and revilings of some hundreds of his fellow-townsmen, the beating of drums, and the clatter of marrowbones and cleavers, he was carried to the Red Lion, followed by old Pipkins himself, in a dreadful state of anxiety, lest his " favouwite statty of Dianny" should fall and be injured.

It will be readily understood that the marquis and his servant, after depositing Tom upon the sofa, had stolen Diana from her pedestal, and with the consent of Mrs. Tom, who really was afraid of being murdered some night, placed the leaden lady in her bed. Old Pipkins forgave the lark, as soon as Diana was safely reinstated; and Tom Drainer never attempted to beat his wife again.

Tittleback knew little and cared less about the pedigree of horses and dogs, but in humans he was very great; and, as I have said in a former number, knew the red-book by heart. He betted a little and played a little, because it was the "correct thing;" but his forte lay in what was then called dandyism—he was essentially a lady's man. He cultivated his whiskers

with patient industry and bear's-grease, and was a great patron and consumer of oils for the hair. The goal of his wishes was to have his name enrolled amongst the members of the best clubs, to give the Tittleback cut for a coat to some first-rate schneider, and keep a Tittleback mixture at Fribourg and Treyer's. He did not indulge in any gymnastic exercises, dreading the influence of the sun and air upon his complexion, and fearing lest the handles of cricket-bats and oars should blister and spoil his hands. He took one lesson in boxing from Mr. Eales; but having received a facer from that scientific gentleman, which not only caused his nose to bleed plentifully, but left a slight enlargement of that prominent feature, and discoloured a neighbouring eye, he declined persevering in an amusement attended by such disfiguring contingencies.

Though he differed in these respects from his friends Balamson and Rattlebones, he cordially agreed with them in being an idle man. He never read more than he was compelled to do, by the aid of cribs and cramming-books, to get

him a degree, with just sufficient of the columns of some fashionable journal to make him *au fait* to the court circular, and the "arrivals and departures" of his fashionable friends.

With these three men Ninny was quite delighted—they were after his own heart, as the saying is. Though shy at first, and fearful of incurring the ridicule of men of such varied and superior attainments, he soon gained sufficient confidence to display his incipient talents in laying and hedging a bet, talking of the first favourite for the St. Leger, and calculating the odds upon the caster and the chances of an *après*.

He cut lectures and chapel in spite of the lectures of the dean, and the weak but well-meant expostulations of Mr. Eugenius Eupheme, his tutor; but was very regular in his attendance at Bullingdon and Cowley Marsh, where he soon became notorious as the best batter and bowler of his day. He acquired considerable celebrity, too, by thrashing the biggest bully in St. Thomas's, a masculine muscular bargeman, whom he beat so soundly for running against his

skiff in Iffleylock, that he narrowly escaped being "had up" for manslaughter before my Lord judge at the next assizes.

Under the able tuition of Stephen Davis, Ninny became such a proficient in rowing, as to pull No. 7 in the Christ Church boat to the stroke of Rattlebones, who was the best oar in Oxford. A little adventure which occurred in practising shall conclude this number.

The usual mode of practising in Oxford is, to pull with some experienced hand in a two-oar from Oxford to Iffley and back, racing pace all the way, and Ninny had got into such excellent training with Stephen, that he resolved to have a pull down to Sandford; and, upon communicating his intention to Balamson and Rattlebones, they agreed to make up a four, and take Tittleback down as a sitter. They were obliged to hire a cad to steer, as Tittleback declined doing so for fear the tiller-ropes should blister and disfigure his hands. It was agreed to have a fish dinner at Sandford, where there is a little public, which is used by the Oxonians for the same purpose as Sirly Hall is by the Etonians,

and Batchelor's, at Putney, by the cockneys. It was in those days as celebrated for its home-brewed and freshwater-fish dinners, under the superintendence of the landlady, Mrs. Davis (no relation of Stephen's), as it is now for every thing edible and drinkable, "provided on the shortest noticc," by Burgess and his attentive wife.

The party reached Sandford safely and quickly without any adventure befalling them worthy of record, excepting the evident annoyance of Tittleback at having his immaculate whites spotted and splashed by the spirts of Stephen, who, of course, pulled stroke; and, as he had not had above two quarts of beer and three glasses of brandy-and-water before he started, was in excellent wind. A dinner of Spitchcock'd eels and underdone beefsteaks was ordered, and the interval required for its preparation filled up by a succession of games at quoits and skittles, at which all the party, save and except Tittleback, were expert players.

The dinner proved excellent, and all did justice to it, particularly Stephen, who ate most

voraciously of eels, of which he was particularly fond, to the horror of Tittleback, whom he informed of the fact that "Those d—d heels halways made im hill, and yet 'e couldn't elp heating hof 'hem when 'e got ha chance." This was not very agreeable intelligence to a delicate gentleman who had to sit immediately before him in a voyage of five miles.

After dinner, the party adjourned to the skittle-alley, where lots of punch, strong beer, and cigars, were ordered to be carried for consumption between the heats. Stephen played and drank beer till the "heels begun to hoperate," when he retired to prevent an unpleasant *cat*astrophe by the application of a series of brandies-and-waters, under the able administration of the landlady.

Stephen's retirement spoilt the side; and, as Tittleback resolutely refused to dirty his fingers by handling the ball, they had serious thoughts of pulling home again to have a little hazard, when three of the men from the neighbouring mill, which was then used for grinding corn, came in from their work to enjoy a game and a

pot of beer. As these men were very famous players, a challenge was immediately given and received, much to Tittleback's disgust, who thought the neighbourhood of a snob was not "the correct thing." He therefore withdrew into the remotest corner with a cigar, though albeit unused to fumigation, and having once returned a box of cigars because they smelt so very strong of tobacco. The consequence was that he got very tipsy in a short time, and was forced to seek the advice of Stephen, who was getting very drunk fast. He filled up a glass of hot brandy-and-water, and presented it to the disgusted Tittleback, telling him to "down with that and up with the heels, and he'd soon be right."

In the alley the game was very interesting; first the snobs won, and then the gentlemen, and of course each victory was celebrated, and each defeat consoled by copious libations of beer and punch — an amusement the snobs promoted, as they knew they should have nothing to pay. When it grew almost too dark to play any longer, for all the party confessed they could not

see the pins clearly, cigars and pipes were lighted, and the snobs induced to sing a song, the gentlemen to join chorus and make speeches: then, unluckily, somehow or other, fighting and wrestling began to be talked about, and, after a little time, trials of strength were proposed, which led, as is usually the case, to a quarrel, which ended, as usual, in a fight; and, I regret to say, that after being on such friendly terms with them for so many hours, Ninny and his friends gave the snobs a tremendous "licking," and then a tremendous quantity of strong beer to allay the pain of their bruises. The score was paid, and they left the alley to find Stephen and Tittleback, and return to Oxford; but both those individuals were too far gone to sit in the boat, so they agreed to walk to Oxford and leave the cad to tow Stephen and their friend back in the bottom of the four-oar, which, as he was rather "consarn'd in licker," was not an easy task, and they must have slept on the "mid-night-deep," had not a barge come up and taken them in tow.

As Rattlebones never left any place without

doing a little mischief, he amused himself by putting two dozen of eggs under the cushion of the landlady's chair, and emptying the sugar-basin into her bonnet, which hung upon a hook in the beam; then, wishing her a polite good-night, pulled down the signboard which misrepresented a fish of some sort, and threw it into the Isis, and, to prevent it being fished out again that night, locked the outer door and threw the key after it.

As they proceeded through the village of Sandford to gain the highroad, he contented himself with letting the sheep out of farmer Allen's fold, and removing the gates from the farmyard, to allow the cows an opportunity of relieving themselves from the irksomeness of confinement.

No opportunity of showing his capabilities presented itself, until, after crossing the church-close, they arrived at the turnpike-gate; this was lifted carefully from its hinges, and deposited in a neighbouring ditch, which must have saved pikey an immensity of annoyance during the night, and the travellers a great many three-pences and sixpences.

The road was very dull until they reached Littlemore, where they fortunately found a public with a farmer's horse hung up to the wall by its bridle. To take off this, and allow the horse to go where he pleased, was the work of a moment. The noise of his horse's shoes on the hard road roused the farmer, who ran out to see what was the matter as fast as a heavy pair of topboots and a large Witney topcoat would allow him. He instantly accused Ninny, who happened to be nearest to him, of loosing his nag, and threatened to lay a heavy whip, which he held in his hand, across his shoulders; for which piece of impertinence, Rattlebones and Balamson, seizing his Witney each by one skirt, by a sudden jerk ripped it up from the waist to the shoulders, and, wrapping the skirts round his arms, made them act as a very effective straightwaistcoat.

The shouts of the farmer, who bellowed for help as loudly as one of his own bulls, brought out several clods, who were doing their best to fulfil the orders of the Act of Parliament—" to be drunk on the premises"—and a general fight

ensued, in which "blood" was getting the better of "bone," until the noise increased so greatly as to arouse the neighbouring cottagers, who, thinking that Mr. Swing was being apprehended for firing ricks, hastened to the spot with lanterns and pitchforks.

Rattlebones was too good a general to suffer himself to be outnumbered, so he beat a retreat, and the trio, disengaging themselves from the *mêlée* by a few well-applied blows, and, starting off at the top of their speed, soon distanced their pursuers. They arrived safely at Tittleback's lodgings, Rattlebones having done nothing in his road but pull up a few of Mr. Costar's best early Yorks, and give them to Jack Hutton's pigs; carried off Hewitt the barber's pole, and Betteris's sign, the "Oxford Arms."

Tittleback had just got home, and was reclining on his sofa, feeling very ungentlemanly at having got intoxicated, which was not "the correct thing," and indignant at being called "old fellow" by Stephen Davis, who was sitting opposite to him, enjoying a tankard of Snuggins's admirable ale.

On the following morning the farmer, who had traced the party to Sandford by the mischief that had been done, learned their names, and was disposed to "pull them up" before the Vice-chancellor, but he fortunately called on Rattlebones before he did so, from whom he received a present of a new coat and a dozen of port wine, which not only pacified him, but made him wish for such a piece of luck every night of his life.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Peter," inquired Mrs. P., "*avey voo præ voter party?*"

"Ha, water party," cried Dusterly; "whose ha go ng to give hit? His hit hat Nuneham?"

"Deary me," continued my wife, throwing a mingled look of pity and contempt into her interesting countenance, 'Mr Dusterly, your *pare* and *mare* were shockingly *neglijay* in idicating of you."

"What his she harter?" inquired Dusterly, looking to me for information.

"Oh, she's merely at her old tricks," I replied, "pretending to talk French. She means to say, that your parents ought to have gone to a little unnecessary expense in your schooling—that's all."

"But why does she call my father a *pear*, hi

should like to harx er? My mother hused to call im ha hold *crab*, hi know, when 'e was hout ho' temper; and then to call er ha *mare! Hi* don't consider hit ha bit more complimentary than calling hof er a feminine dog, that's what hi don't," said Dusterly, looking gimlets and brad-awls at my old woman.

"Don't be a fool, Dusterly," said Broome, "Mrs. Priggins means no offence. Come, marm, tell us in plain English, if you please, what you wish to know of my friend Peter."

"*Ong oon mo*, then," said Mrs. P., tartly, "I wish to know if he has made up his mind to have done with your long *fatty-gaing* story about that Mr. Nincompoop. I wish he was dead, buried, and registered, that's what I do—a stoopid feller!"

"Meaning me, marm?" I inquired, with the irascibility of an author justly incensed at such a coarse bit of criticism. "You don't imagine I'm going to murder a right honourable, just to please you."

"Come, come," said Broome: "Peter, you forget yourself. I can assure you, marm, my

story is nearly at an end, and I hope that assurance will satisfy you, and recall your smiles."

"Oh! *too sela a too tray beang*—but there he sits in the little garret, that he calls his study, scribbling all day long the stuff you cram him with overnight at that horrid Shirt and Shotbag; and if one goes to ask him a question on any *soojay,* he snaps at one like an angry *babbycon.*"

"Ha what?" said Dusterly.

"A lap-dog, stoopid!" replied Mrs. P., closing upon him, and putting her nose within an inch of his face; "and I tell you what, Mr. Ignoramus, I look upon you as the worser of the three. While they're composing their articles, as they call writing their stuff and nonsense, you sit by sotting and encouraging of them. And that Mr. Rakestraw ought to have his licence taken away; and if nobody else won't make it his duty to do it, I'll write to the Vice-Chancellor myself—*jay finny.*"

Having thus concisely stated her opinions and determinations, Mrs. P. bounced out of the room, to explain to her friend Mrs. Chops, the

barber's wife, who was waiting for her in the kitchen with some fresh-curled false fronts, the cause of the *petty tompate* she must have heard in the *sallong à dinnay*.

I apologized to my friends, as I now do the readers of the *N. M. M.*, for this indiscreet exhibition of my wife's iracundity.

I must confess, however, that she had some little cause to be angry, for we had "kept it up" for more than a month, after midnight, at Mr. Rakestraw's respectable public, and done more than our "duty on spirits." But to the "conclusion of my tale," as the little pig said of his caudality, when it was bitten off and devoured in a lively gambol with one of his brothers or sisters.

Mr. Peregrine Tittleback having kept his master's term, went up to London, and used his best exertions to get into all the best clubs in succession; but by some mysterious agency, for which he could never account, there was a "run upon the black" balls whenever and wherever he was balloted for. At last a new club was started, called "The Seedy Society," into which

he gained admission by putting down his name amongst the first subscribers, who were to constitute the committee. There he lived from "sunny morn to dewy eve," and was allowed to be so great a nuisance by every body, as to gain for himself the sobriquet of the "Member for Borem." He never rested until he had found out the main trunk and collateral branches of the family of every gentleman who was ambitious of joining the Seedies; and, as the candidates for admission were generally a "queer team," these minute investigations into family matters were not always agreeable. Nor did he confine his inquiries to the members of the club, but condescended to inquire into the domestic affairs of all the domestics. In the course of these inquiries he made two or three bold but unfortunate hits—*exempli gratia*—

"Waiter!" cried he, seeing a fresh man in green plushes. "New servant—eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"What's your name—eh?"

"John, sir, *here;* I was called William at the Albion, Robert at the Bedford, and Benjamin at the —"

"Well, never mind the aliases—what's your family title—eh?"

"Smith, sir."

"What, Smith with an *i*—eh?"

Now as the poor fellow had lost one of his optics by an accident, and was known amongst his brother teapots as "Jack with the telescope eye," he considered this question as an intentional insult, and revenged it by slily pouring the gravy down the back of Mr. Peregrine's coat, and squirting the bottled porter over his smalls as often as he could contrive to do so. *Encore*—

"Porter! any letters for me to-day?"

"No, sir."

"By the by, what's your name, porter—eh?"

"Barnaby Burke, sir."

"No relation to the great Burke, I suppose, that used to make such capital speeches—eh?"

"I have not that honour, sir."

"Burke—Burke—let me see—oh, I have it, the man that was hung for stifling people with sticking-plaster, treacle, burgundy pitch, or some such adhesive thing, for anatomical purposes—eh? Was he your brother?"

Barnaby uttered an indignant and loud "No," and from that day forth punished him for so offensive a supposition, by putting the worst hat in the club upon *his* peg, and exchanging his brown silk umbrella for a four-and-ninepenny green gingham.

Poor Peregrine, I regret to say, was shot in a duel in Battersea Fields, for asking Mr. Fitz-somebody Something in what church his mother was married, which was not "the correct thing." He was carried to the Red House, and expended his last breath in inquiring of the surgeon in attendance, whose name happened to be Cribb, whether he was any relation to the notorious boxer.

But to return to Oxford, to Nincompoop, and his intimates, Balamson and Rattlebones.

They pursued the course of killing time usually adopted by idle men, and got into and out of many scrapes and difficulties. Ninny's inattention to college duties was so glaring, that it certainly would have been visited by rustication, if not expulsion, had not the whole bench of bishops been in so rickety a state of health, as

not to justify the Dean in offending his patron, Lord Wastepaper, by punishing his *protégé*.

It will readily be understood, that tandemizing, cricketizing, boatizing, *et omne quod exit in* izing, is not to be carried on without a considerable expenditure. Ninny's finances were often at a very low ebb, notwithstanding the liberal sum allowed him by his governor at Lady Skinnykin Frostyface's suggestion. He adopted a very simple but ingenious plan of procuring the supplies when the last remittance was expended. He called upon his tutor, Mr. Eugenius Eupheme, to write him out a list of a few books necessary for carrying out his system of a course of college reading. This list, which was sure to be a lengthy and expensive one, he enclosed in a letter to his governor, and begged him to send him up a check to cover the amount, as books were always ready money articles. Lord Fuddlehead was fool enough to believe such a gross enormity, and to have additional book-shelves put up in his library, ready for the reception of the cart-loads of classics he anticipated would arrive in the principality after his son had read them all at Oxford.

As Ninny never bought one of these books, of course he could not read them unless he borrowed them, which never occurred to him as at all necessary. He contented himself with being crammed for his *smalls*—as the first examination, the responsions, is now called—having lost its former name of "little-go." He found a man to *coach* him who suited him exactly, as he did all his reading for him, by construing and parsing every line, and supplied him with a *memoria technica*, by converting the names of all the most respectable heroes of antiquity into some less euphonious modern titles. Thus, *iratus Achilles* was transmogrified into *Mr. High-rate-us O'Kill-us.* The crafty *Ulysses* was designated as *Polly-meet-us and dust-us. Dux ille Trojanus* was known as *Pye-house-come-knead-us;* and thus every one of the *dramatis personæ* in the "Æneid" and "Iliad" was furnished, like a modern pickpocket, with a convenient *alias,* whether he held the rank of general or captain, sergeant or corporal. The speeches, too, which Homer tells us his heroes found time, amidst the din of battle, to make to each other,

before they had a set-to in single combat, were fully impressed upon the pupils' minds, by being translated into the slang of Josh. Hudson and Jack Scroggins. The odes of Horace and Anacreon were set to the music of "All round my hat"—"If I had a donkey," and other popular tunes; to which any gentleman, who is melodiously given, and likes to try the experiment, will find some of them go remarkably well.

This ingenious innovation upon the old system of cramming gave great offence to the public tutors, who did all they could to prevent their men from resorting to the services of Mr. Exlex, for such was this inventive genius's real name, though he was familiarly called *Legs* by his pupils. The Slow-coaches, however, and the Desperates, who had no chance of getting through their examinations by the regular methods, did not hesitate risking the displeasure of the college authorities, by engaging a seat in Legs's coach, to ensure a safe journey through the schools. His coach, as he said, carried twelve passengers daily, but, as no one could stand cramming for twelve hours in succession,

he took them by teams — four-in-hand — every hour from nine till twelve, by which means he economized time and talk. He worked at lower fares than other "coaches," but he always took his money before he started, and never mounted his box before he was booked full.

Ninny, Balamson, and Rattlebones, who were all going up for their *smalls*, were, therefore, forced to look out for a fourth passenger to take the vacant seat in the ten o'clock coach. This was soon accomplished in the person of Mr. Democritus Drinkwater, a gentleman-commoner of Christ Church, who had been plucked twice, more from nervousness and timidity than want of brains or scholarship. He was the eldest son and heir to a man who had risen from under the counter of a mercer's shop, where he slept every night, first to his young mistress's bedroom, and a junior partnership in the concern ; and, at last, upon the governor's death, to the whole of a very lucrative business. In a few years, by successful and large speculations in Osnaburgs and printed calicoes, he realized a large fortune. He was made — or rather his money made him — a

common-councilman, then alderman, sheriff, lord mayor, and lastly M. P. for the city of London. In the House he was too wise a man to open his mouth, except to say "How do you do?" to his colleague, or eat his chop at Bellamy's. He was, consequently, considered a very clever man, and a very useful member.

Democritus, in furtherance of the views of his ambitious governor, who was weak enough to think that his money would ensure his son the mastership of the Rolls, or the vice-chancellorship at least, was sent to Eton to be prepared for the bar. There, when the source of his father's wealth was discovered, he was christened "Dimity," and nearly bullied to death by his patrician playmates. His career was any thing but a pleasant or successful one. He never made his appearance without being pestered about the price of cottons or Irish linens, or being recommended to ask his governor to apply for the situation of "President of the Board of *Trade!*" Being naturally of a timid and shy disposition, he had not nerve enough to put a stop to this system of bullying by laughing at it, or thrash-

ing his tormentors; nor had he courage enough to display the talents of which he really was possessed.

When he left Eton, which he did without any

"Feelings of regret,"

he tried all he could to induce his father to allow him to enter the business, or some quiet little college or hall at Oxford as a commoner.

Neither of these arrangements accorded with the ideas of the wealthy citizen, and he insisted on his going to Christ Church as a gentleman commoner. He found himself much more comfortable in this exalted situation than he had anticipated. His gentlemanly and quiet demeanour caused him to be highly respected by the tutors and by the reading men, with whom he principally associated.

After reading steadily for six terms, he went up for his responsions, and stammered through his *vivâ-voce* examination so nervously as to convince the masters of the schools that he had not read his books. He was plucked in conse-

quence. A second attempt met with the same ill-luck. As his father insisted on his making one more trial, and as he began to doubt the utility of reading his books again upon the regular plan, he listened to the advice of Balamson, and took the vacant seat in Mr. Legs's ten o'clock coach.

Mr. Legs did not require his pupils to attend at his rooms, but kindly waited upon them in their own. Many reasons might be assigned for this unusual way of proceeding; but the most powerful was the fact of its being unsafe for him to open his oak to all morning callers. Though he made a great deal of money by private coaching, his habits were expensive, and his duns troublesome. Another was, he never lectured without a pot of porter in the pewter by his side, and, as he emptied several in the course of the hour, it was much more seemly to have them put down in another man's battels than his own. It was not from meanness or stinginess that he adopted this plan, for he was liberal in the extreme, but really from a desire to conceal his love of brown stout, and his asto-

nishing capabilities as a consumer of it, from the eyes of the Manciple and Bursar.

If the reader wishes to have an idea how Mr. Legs lectured, he will have the goodness to accompany me to Balamson's rooms in Peckwater, on the morning before the day he was to go into the schools.

The time is ten o'clock, and breakfast, which has been rather an elaborate meal, is just over. In the centre of the room is the breakfast-table, on which may be seen the remnants of stewed kidneys, underdone beefsteaks, cold ham, egg-shells, Wytham strawberries, commonses of bread, twists, rolls, and brown Georges; a tea-pot with the nob knocked off, a large black coffee-pot, and three quart silver tankards, which have contained pale ale and brown stout; a lot of sugar in a whity-brown bag, but no sugar-tongs, they being an article of plate that is never seen in a man's rooms after his first term—though what becomes of them all nobody can tell.

The owner of the rooms may be seen lounging on the sofa, dressed in a sort of grey Witney

cloth reading-gown, a garment which was much in vogue in the days of which I am writing. He is industriously "getting up" and abusing Aldrich's Logic, and caressing an exceedingly ugly but perfect Highland terrier, which is flying at the boot-toe of Rattlebones, who occupies the other end of the sofa, and provokes Philibegs, between the chapters of Xenophon's Anabasis, by kicking him on the nose. Ninny is buried in a reading-chair, inspecting his betting-book, to see what he wins in case he should not be plucked. The odds are five to one against him, and no takers but himself among the juniors, while the seniors consider his failure "poundage." Democritus is sitting on the seat near an open window, in order that the breezes may check the violent perspiration into which the thoughts of his examination invariably throw him.

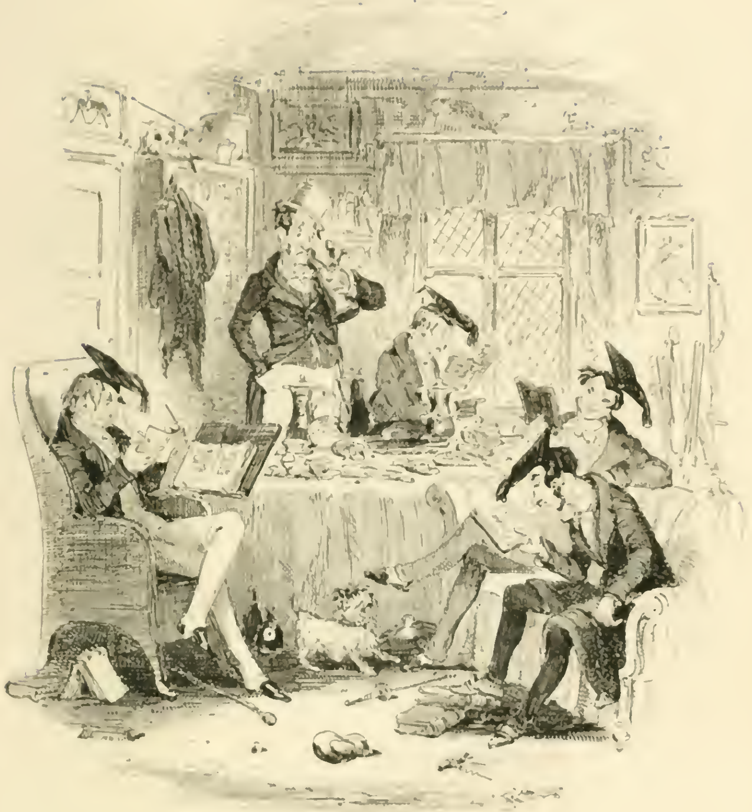
Great Tom strikes ten o'clock, and, in less than five minutes, which have been occupied in walking from his nine o'clock team, Mr. Legs gives a mysterious but well-known tap at the door, and, without waiting for "come in," enters the room.

After noticing his pupils by a circular sort of nod, but without speaking, he seizes the nearest tankard. Finding it empty, he examines the other two, and closes the lid of the last with a disgusting look at finding himself balked of his expected draught. He then advances to the open window, and shouts out loudly for Broome, who, knowing what is wanted, hurries to the buttery, brings a two-quart cup of porter, and places it on the lecture-table, with a pewter-pot by its side. Mr. Legs fills the pewter, taking care to hold the jug high enough above it to make the liquor froth up, and then blows the top off, as hackneycoachmen and coalheavers are wont to do, and takes a draught nearly

" As deep as the rolling Zuyder Zee."

He then sits down and thrusts his long calfless legs, encased in white cord-shorts and long drab kerseymere gaiters, under " the mahogany," and, placing his white beaver by his side on the ground, exclaims—

" Now, my kiveys, shy up your castors, tie your bird's-eye wipes to the stakes, and go to work."



This classical allusion to the commencement of a prize-fight (for Legs was so fond of pugilistics that he offered to edite and correct the proofs of "Boxiana" for nothing) elicits an exclamation of "No go, old fellow, we ain't in sufficient training yet," from his three noble pupils, and a nervous negative shake of the head from Mr. Drinkwater, who perspires too much to speak.

"What, not up to your work, eh? bellows to mend still? Well, here's one more pull at the 'whipcord,' and then to show you how to go in and win," replies Legs, finishing the residue of the porter, and winking at Broome for a "relay."

"Now let's get ready to start the logic coach first; and as there's only three in the team, I must put you along unicorn fashion. Ninny, old fellow, as you don't run in this coach, you may employ yourself in crib-biting, or moistening your mouth ready for a stage in the four-horse Horace mail."

Ninny did make an attempt to take up logic, but dropped it at the very commencement; for

being told there were three *operations* of the mind, it put him so much in mind of physic, which was the only thing to which he had heard the word operate applied, that he nauseated the *ars instrumentalis*, and took to Euclid instead.

While, therefore, Mr. Legs was lecturing on logic, he amused himself and annoyed his friends by trying to play "Polly, put the kettle on," upon the keyed bugle; but, finding it too difficult, exchanged it for "In my cottage," a much easier air, of which he could play the first three bars very much out of tune.

But for a specimen of Legs's mode of lecturing:

"Well, my pals, where did we pull up last journey?"

"At syllogisms," replied Rattlebones.

"All right! so we did. Well, a syllogism is this sort of a concern—

> 'All prizefighters are regular bricks,
> Josh. Hudson is a prizefighter—'

Ergo, which means therefore,

> 'Josh. is a regular brick.'

You won't forget that?

"Now, you see the two first propositions are called premises—you know what premises are? No! Why Costar's stables are his 'premises' —you won't forget that? Well, the first is called the major — Major Smith, you know, who 'posted the tin' for Peter Crawley — you won't forget that? and the other is called the minor. A minor, you know, is a little kivey that ain't of age to touch the dibs — you won't forget that? The last is called the conclusion, the end of the fight, when one of the men can't come to time — you won't forget that?"

Mr. Legs took a little more "whipcord," and handed the pewter round to his class. He then continued his lecture much in the same style, until he had run through the third part of Aldrich, which he did in twenty minutes exactly.

He then commenced his lecture on the Greek books, and, as he shone in giving a liberal translation of a battle, I will give one specimen of his method. Any gentleman who has not forgotten his classics, and likes to refer to the original

passage, will find it in the 7th book of the Iliad, line 244:

"Ἦ ῥα, καὶ ἀμπεπαλὼν, κ. τ. λ."

"He chaffed indeed, and, shaking his stick, whirled it at Ajax (we'll call him Jack, for short — you won't forget that?), but merely hit his carcass-guarder, which was kivered over with the cracklings of seven masculine cud-chewers, and formed of eight tin plates; the oaken plant cut slap through six hides, but was jammed like Jackson in No. 7. Next, that son-of-a-heathen-deity, Jack, let fly his walking-stick and hit Priam's cock chickabiddy on his pot-lid; the well-seasoned ash went clean through his figured waistcoat, and would have given him a belly-go-fuster, but he bobbed and diddled black Death."

After the Greek was "polished off," in another twenty minutes, and the "whipcord" had been again passed round, the Latin lecture commenced, and the well-known boat-race of Virgil, lib. v., 139, was thus rendered:—

"They sit down upon the thwarts, hold up their oars, and keep a sharp look-out for the

signal; their hearts go pitapat from expecting no end of κῦδος. As soon as the trumpeter blows his tin, they stand for no repairs, but away they go. Hurrah! from all hands. In go the oars, and the water hisses round the bows—the Derby pace is nothing to theirs—the men on the banks cheer them on, amidst loud cries of 'Go it, my tulips.' Gyas (we'll call him Guy—you won't forget that?) shoots ahead with Cloanthus (we'll call him 'old Clo',' as the Jews say—you won't forget that?), closes on his counter, the better oar of the two, but pulling a heavier skiff. The Pristis (very like a whale, you know) and the Centaur (part man, part horse, you know—think of a pot of half-and-half, and you won't forget that) come up bow-and-bow just behind them. The barge—the goal—is in view, Guy leading; when old Clo' tries the artful dodge, cuts off a point, and gets ahead. Guy begins abusing his cox'en for not keeping closer in-shore, and, the moment he sees old Clo' ahead of him, hits his steerer a cut on the head and knocks him into the river—he swims to shore, and in course all the men on the bank laugh at

him and his dripping toggery. 'Hurrah! go it! well pulled!' The rowers begin to blow—their mouths feel as dry as a dust-heap, and the sweat runs down their noses. One, from steering too close in-shore, runs aground, and hits it up as a bad business. On they go! the race is between Guy and old Clo', but the latter being in best wind eventually wins, and, amidst the shouts of the men on the barge, hoists his colours to the head of the flag-staff, and sacks the tin."

Tom strikes eleven. Mr. Legs finishes his lecture and the porter, make his nod circumbendingly, and hurries off to work his last team.

This unprofessional method of conveying instruction will doubtless appear extraordinary, and rather vulgar to most people; but I can assure them it was very successful, and got many men through the schools who were considered "dead plucks" by their friends and tutors.

The truth of this assertion was proved in the case of Balamson and Drinkwater, who were up on the same day, and, though it certainly was a

" shave," got their testamurs, and tipped Dodd his " five bob" with great pleasure. Drinkwater's success—for, as I have explained already, his nervousness and timidity had caused his previous failures — may be attributed to Mr. Legs having made him breakfast on warm calf's feet jelly, into which two glasses of curaçoa and a little champagne brandy had been stirred. Legs makes a point of breakfasting with his men—or horses as he calls them—on the morning they go into the schools, in order that he may give them their " drench" and secure himself and them a final *cram*.

As Ninny thought himself quite equal, if not superior, to Balamson and Drinkwater in scholarship, he made sure of passing, and took the odds against himself to a much greater amount than he had ventured to do before the success of his friends was made certain. He " stood to win" enough to cover all his ticks, and they amounted to a considerable sum. If he lost, a fresh list of books from Mr. Eupheme, and a check for the amount of them from his gullible governor, would easily be obtained to meet the demands upon him.

His mind being perfectly comfortable on money matters, he set-to with his tiger, Higgins, with great success, the day before his examination, to get himself into good wind for a set-to with the examiners. Just as he was in the midst of a very spirited "rally," and was giving poor Higgins "pepper" up in a corner into which he had driven him, Broome entered with a message from Mr. Eupheme, who wished to see him immediately. Having knocked Higgins down as a *finale* to the set-to, he put on his clothes and his academics, in order to be *prout statuta requirunt*, and hastened to his tutor's rooms.

Mr. Eupheme, who had been *sitting* for six hours, searching every authority he could think of for the exact English of several Greek particles, such as ὡς, ἀρα, μεν, γε, δη, which were crammed into one line of Homer, was refreshing himself by *standing* to complete the investigation at a high desk, and rejoicing in a change of attitude which rendered him "good" for another six hours' search. He had made the ingenious discovery, that standing upon one leg at a time rested the other, by watching the ducks in

Christ-Church meadow out of his bed-room window while he was shaving.

Mr. Eupheme, the reader will be pleased to remember, was mild in his manners and mystifying in his discourse; being, moreover, exceedingly particular in his quantities.

"Good morning, Mr. Nincompoop," he said to Augustus; "I have summoned you to ascertain, by a superficial inquisition, the probabilities of your satisfying the masters of the schools to-morrow. But I entreat your pardon — remain not perpendicular, but relieve your crural members and the spinosity of your vertebræ, by reposing your corpusculum upon a chair or cubiculum."

Ninny did not exactly understand this request; but as Mr. Eupheme took a chair himself, he thought it too good an example not to be followed.

Mr. Eupheme continued, — "You are fully apprized, I opine, of the nature and objects of this first examination, which is correctly designated 'responding,' inasmuch as the candidates for the *epitogium generalis sophistæ* are required

to answer or respond to certain grammatical, syntactical, and prosodical questions which the examiners in their wisdom may think it requisite to put to them."

"Why, yes!" said Ninny, who saw that his tutor expected a confirmation of his opination, "I sat in the schools, but although I picked a saint's day, and went in at half-price, it was so very slow, I believe I went to sleep."

"Then," said Mr. Eupheme, smiling benevolently, "the papaverous influences of Somnus or Morpheus deprived you of the advantage of ascertaining the *modus operandi* used in conducting an examination."

"Oh! I heard one man—rather a spoon than not—plucked for not answering his entomology," said Ninny, bungling a little on the last word.

"Pray pardon me, my honourable young friend," said Mr. Eupheme, looking a little shocked; "but you mean *ety*mology — from ἐτυμολογια *quod ab* ἔτυμος *verus et* λογος *verbum*. Now entomology—*ab* ἔντομα *insecta et* λογος *verbum*, treats of the nature and habits of those minute created animalities which are commonly

called insects, *ab in* into, and *seco* to cut. You probably have not studied their properties and propensities?"

"Why, sir," said Ninny, not liking to confess his ignorance, "I—I—was once bitten by a bug, and I understand they have a propensity for occupying old properties in the shape of bedsteads, drawers, and hair-trunks."

"Right, very right, sir — for so small an animal their powers of dentition and indentation are very great, and a remedy for the irr*ita*mentality caused by their bite upon the epidermis has long been a desideratum among the eruditest pathologists."

"There can't be a doubt about it," said Ninny, twiddling and spinning his watch-key, and not knowing what to say.

"I regret to learn, Mr. Nincompoop," resumed Mr. Eupheme, "that you have had recourse to the hired services of Mr. Exlex — his exuberant employment of metaphors, which the vulgar call slang, operates detrimentally in the perfectibility of his pupils in the 'urbanities.'"

"He's a capital crammer, though," said

Ninny, "and wraps up a great deal in a small parcel, like William, at the Star, who can pack a quart of wine into a pint decanter."

"An ingenious δουλος," exclaimed Mr. Eupheme, astonished at the compressible powers of William the Waiter. "But to the object of our present colloquy. I wish to ascertain your abilities in Latinity. There are materials for explaining your ideas in writing on that table Sit down, and compose a theme or a copy of verses—hexameter acatalectics—on any subject you please to select. I am going to perambulate constitutionally for two hours, and will lock you in my rooms until my return, lest your composition should not be original. You will not need a dictionary, as it is not verbosity, but construction that is regarded in our schools. For the present—*vale!*"

After saying this, Mr. Eupheme did as the Druids do on festive occasions — "sported his oak," and left the astonished Ninny to do what he had never done before—an exercise for himself.

He drew the paper towards him, and a great variety of horses' heads and dogs' heads upon

the paper. Then he mended his pen, and walked up and down the room, examining the ceiling very accurately, as if he expected to see a subject or a copy of verses upon the plastering; then he looked out of window, intending to send a note to Legs, or the barber, to tell them to do something for him, and drop it into the letter-box; but there was not a man in *quad* (I don't mean in prison), and all the scouts were gone out of college. He returned to the table again, and began to try a theme on the most hackneyed school-subjects, but it would not do. Then, as he had been used to doing doggrel verses twice a week at Rotherwick, or rather to read them over after they were done for him, he resolved to try his hand at them. As the subject was left to himself, he chose one, and having headed it

"LUDI BULLINGDONIENSES,"

he took some unwarrantable liberties with the Latin language, and treated it thus:

"Ah! me! quam durum est sine Gradû scribere versus!
Sed precor, O musæ, quæ nunc o' you live up on high there,
Mittite opem misero, qui 'gainst his will's made a poeta.
Illos dum celebro, qui cunctos in batting and bowling
Exsuperant, necnon over hurdles jumpere gaudent.

Amplius haud foxhounds nemorosis montibus errant,
Nec canis in vacuo leporem petit, aut in a hedge-row.
Nostri venatores sunt omnes blister'd and turn'd out,
Coccineæque togæ servis donantur equinis.
Non summis ocreis aptatur calceus acer,
Pendet inutiliter clavo flagellus, et omnes
Nunc vittas removent, quæ tied their hats to their coat-
collars.

Quisque 'quid est factu?' quærit nondum-graduatus.
'Vernum tempus adest,' ait unus, 'let's have a ride up
Ad Bullingdon viridem, Cowleyiive paludem.'
Dissentit nemo; sed mittit his scout to a hackman
Quisque later regularis. Equi qui gallop by instinct
Tunc adstant foribus, genibusque et corde trementes.
Nil mirum! nam sunt fracti ventosi from hard work
Atque carent *jint ile*, ebriosos quod facit illos.
Ascendunt omnes, showing off as they ride down the high
street.
Cumque ad turnpikum veniunt, pecunia deest,
Et Dominus Harpur homines non trustere solet;
Promittunt omnes alio die solvere toll-man,
Sed, nictans oculis, ille loudly pronounces it 'no go'
Et portam claudit, clavemque pockettibus abdit.
Tunc revocat passus unus to borrow a shilling
(Consumunt alii tempus in abusing the pikeman).
Porta patet, solido soluto. 'Go it, ye cripples!'
Vociferant, 'Tally-ho! yoicks! forward!' and all sorts o'
noises.
Quisque tenet sedem—luto limoque repleta
Heu! cum fossa patet, two or three of 'em tumble in head-
long;
Tunc alii rident et equi scamper off round the common.

Apparent, cratibus clausis, ovilia longè—
Vociferant, 'Hurrah! Age tunc habeamus alaudam.
Insiliunt, tunc exsiliunt—quod frightens the baa-lambs.
Sed cito pastor adest: furcâ baculoque minatur
Illos: diffugiunt rapidè. Tentoria velis
Candidulis adstant, homines ubi gooseberry champagne,
Porter, ale, et cider potant when heated at cricket.
Hospes stat portâ, roseo spectabilis ore,
Et quærit 'what d'ye want?' then *pop* go the bottles of
champagne.
Tunc baculo et pilâ ludunt for two or three horas.
Artus sudor habet; vini falsique doloris
Consumunt calathos multos, et get rather swipy,
Solvere non meditantur. Equi portantur; et omnes
Ascendunt, nam dinner adest. Sic rursus ad Oxford!"

When Ninny had completed this elegant copy of verses, Tom struck five, and Broome came in to tell Mr. Eupheme that the hall-bell was ringing for dinner. Ninny gave him the verses, and hurried to his rooms to dress.

In the meanwhile, Broome was much surprised that Mr. Eupheme was absent, as he seldom missed dining in hall. Upon making inquiries for him at Tom and Canterbury gates, the porters could give no account of him. Dinner passed, the port was consumed in the common-room, coffee discussed, and the dons

retired for the night, without any news of Mr. Eupheme.

Broome became alarmed, and made himself a large jug of gin-punch, being determined to sit up all night for him. Knowing that his master was often guilty of mental absenteeism, he imagined it was possible he might have walked into the Cherwell or Isis, and been drowned, or into a gravel-pit, and broken his neck.

Tom tolled the "midnight hour," and Broome replenished his jug. He then arranged in his mind all the necessary preliminaries for a coroner's inquest, and made imaginary preparations for a mournful funeral in the cathedral, when, just as he was seeing the coffin lowered into the vault, the well-known creak of his master's shoes was heard on the stairs. He sprung from his chair, hid the gin-punch in the coal-hole, and opened the oak, which he had sported from fear of ghosts.

Mr. Eupheme, it appeared, had strolled down the High Street, intending to take a constitutional up Headington Hill; but seeing a coach just starting for London, resolved to have a

shilling ride to Sandford, and walk back along the banks of Governor Isis. Upon the coach, and by his side, was a melancholy-looking German, who had been to lionize the University. With him Mr. Eupheme speedily got involved in a deep discussion upon metaphysics, and so earnestly was he engaged in trying to convince his new acquaintance that all his opinions and arguments were founded on "erroneosity," that he forgot to tell the coachman to pull up at Sandford, and did not recollect where he was, until the coach stopped to dine at the now-nearly-ruined-by-the-railway town of Henley-on-Thames. Hence he returned by the first coach; and as the night was rather frosty, and he had no great-coat, he caught a violent cold, and was forced to lie in bed all the next day. This unfortunate occurrence prevented his seeing Ninny's verses, until it was too late to prevent his going up for his examination.

Mr. Legs of course breakfasted with Ninny before he went into the schools, and administered his favourite drench of calf's-foot jelly and curaçoa—he considered it quite as good as three

penn'orth of old beans to a horse, when an unusually hard journey is before him.

Ninny was in excellent spirits, and confident of winning his testamur and his bets. He therefore made a very hearty breakfast of devilled kidneys and brown stout before he took his draught. He then put on a white tie, and his cap and gown, and went to a shop to purchase those ridiculous things called bands, which the statutes still require men to wear in the schools. Of course he purchased the smallest pair that could be obtained, and stuffed them under his tie, that they might not be seen.

He laughed and talked merrily enough as he walked along the streets; but when he got into the schools' quad, the atmosphere of the place, or the pallid faces of the men who were going up with him, and were walking about waiting for the doors to be opened, made him feel less confident of success. When the masters of the schools appeared, looking rather sulky and disgusted with the task before them, he began to feel in a funk. He tried to disguise it by talking and laughing loudly with his friends,

and was not sorry when the doors were opened, and he was enabled to escape their observation.

He had almost reached the table, when he ran back again and called to Legs, who was going up the stairs leading to the gallery, in order to hear his examination :—

"I say, Legs, old fellow, just tell me, for fear they should ask me—was Xenophon a Grecian or a Roman?"

"A Grecian," said Legs; "think of the Grecian coffee-house in London, and you won't forget that."

Ninny locked up the information in the store-closet of his memory, and hurried up to the table.

The names were called over, and, as his was the first on the list, he was requested to take up his Anabasis, turn to a certain passage, and begin.

Now the gentleman who began to examine him happened to be a man of no abilities or scholarship whatever. He had been injudiciously appointed to the situation from friendly motives, by one of the proctors of the year.

The men used to laugh at him and bully him in the schools, by making the most absurd mistakes, on purpose to see if he could detect them. When he found this out, which he did in a very few days, he "read up" overnight, by the aid of Cribs and Clavis's, some of the most difficult passages in the books which the men took up, and did his best to pluck his tormentors.

The other gentleman was a very clever man, and exceedingly good-tempered, but he took a good many private pupils, and, as time was very valuable to him, he never gave a fumbler a second passage, but floored him at once, and went on to the next man, in order to get the business over as quickly as possible that he might go to his pupils.

"Now, Mr. Nincompoop," said Mr. Heavyhead, "will you begin?"

Ninny coughed thrice, and pulled his gown up on his shoulder. He then *read* the passage very fluently, long words and all; but when he began to construe, his fluency deserted him, and after bungling through the little words, came to a dead stand-still at the first long one.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Heavyhead; "go on."

After waiting for a little while, Ninny, to break the dead silence which was alarming, made a shot, and went so near the mark, that Mr. Heavyhead, not being certain about the word himself, nodded his head and allowed him to proceed.

He contrived to bungle through the construing somehow, but when the grammatical part of the examination commenced, he made so many egregious blunders, that even Mr. Heavyhead was convinced he was a much worse scholar than himself. He therefore looked surprised at such gross ignorance, and throwing down his book, asked Mr. Swift, his brother examiner, if he would try him with a few questions.

Mr. Swift pulled out his watch, and replied,

"Oh dear! no—it's a quarter past ten already—give him a few questions on paper, and if he can't answer them, turn him out."

Mr. Heavyhead acted as he was ordered; and Ninny, after looking over the paper, and finding he could not answer one of the questions, thought of bolting, and giving up all chance of

passing for that time. He recollected, however, that some men, situated like himself, had managed to get their papers done for them. He therefore copied out the questions, and as he sat at the end of the table nearest the gallery, screwed the paper up like a small ball, and winking at Legs, jerked it at him under his arm. The paper unluckily fell short, and rolled along the ground close to the feet of Mr. Heavyhead.

He picked it up, and immediately saw through the meaning of this duplicate copy of his own questions.

The reader will not be so surprised at his sharpness on this occasion, when I tell him that he, Mr. Heavyhead, was strongly suspected of having got his degree by the same means.

After whispering a few words to Mr. Swift, who looked at his watch, and said,

"Oh yes—by all means—it's half-past ten," he called Ninny up to the table, and began a long and serious harangue upon the impropriety of his conduct.

Mr. Swift interrupted him by saying, "There, that will do—cut it short—it only wants five-

and-twenty minutes to eleven: Mr. Nincompoop, we can't go on with your examination—you must leave the schools. Next gentleman come up as soon as possible."

Ninny looked up to the gallery and smiled lugubriously at his friends, who made a rush to the door to meet and condole with him.

"Never mind, old fellow," said Legs; "linchpin came out, and let you down—eh?"

"Better luck another time," said Balamson.

"Bad throw, Ninny, for the best bowler on Bullingdon," said Rattlebones.

"Very unfortunate you couldn't recollect that second aorist," said Drinkwater, looking sympathetic.

"Oh! d— the second aorist!" replied Ninny, taking off his bands, and tearing them into fragments; "I don't care a farthing about it, only I believe that excessive ass, Heavyhead, didn't know what tense it was himself. Let's go to the Vine, get some porter, and see the Age start."

"But I say, old fellow," said Balamson, "I'll trouble you for that £50 I've won."

"And I for that £40," said Rattlebones.

"All right," said Ninny: "I must give you an I O U, as I've got no tin. I must write home to the governor to-night."

The party, headed by Legs, who never neglected his porter when an opportunity offered of imbibing it, went over to the Vine, and did justice to Mr. Stevens's excellent tap.

"Never say die, old fellow," said Legs to Ninny, seeing him rather lower than usual in spirits. "You've had a fall, to be sure, but haven't broken your knees, only just rubbed the hair off. We must curb you up tighter next journey."

"Oh! I don't care about it, if you mean that," replied Ninny; "and if you'll all dine with me to-day, I'll go over to the Mitre, and order a spread at six o'clock."

A ready assent was given, and Dennis had "the office," as Legs said, to get a "regular spread."

As they had a long day before them, and nothing particular to do, their horses were ordered, and they started for Woodstock, to have a gallop round the beautiful park of Blenheim.

Rattlebones did very little mischief that day: he merely stole one of old Templeman's Blenheim puppies, that was fastened near the park gates to attract purchasers, and put it into a post-boy's boot. To be sure he stuck a large thistle-top under a commercial's horse's tail, and set him kicking. He also removed the linchpins out of one yellow postchaise, which would be called out with the "first turn." Sam, the waiter, too, missed his corkscrew, but then he found it next morning screwed into the back of his master's best great coat, so that he did not lose it after all.

The keeper who rode round with them to show them the *crosscade* (as he will insist upon calling the waterfall), and the other objects worthy of being seen, was surprised to find, the next morning, that the chimney of Rochester's tower smoked so much that the fire could not be lighted. He found on examination, that the marquis had kindly put a large square stone, which formed part of the battlements, upon the chimney-pot, to prevent the little birds from tumbling down the flue.

After a very good and substantial luncheon at the Bear, with lots of bottled porter, they all returned to Oxford, where they found Mr. Legs, who had never left the Vine all day, very far gone, or, as he expressed it, "considerably consarned in liquor." At his own particular request he was put to bed at the Mitre, in order that he might sleep off the effects of the porter, and be ready to join them in the evening.

Need I say the dinner was excellent and the wines good? Nothing could be better, and they all did justice to it and them. It would be a waste of time to attempt to describe all that was said and done, the practical jokes that were played off, and the capital songs that were sung at this dinner-party. All Oxford parties are much the same, and in describing one, which I have done in "Mr. Singleton Slipslop's great-go party," I have described all.

Upon this occasion a great deal of wine was drunk, because the men, with the exception of Drinkwater, had capabilities of no ordinary kind. He, poor fellow, got very tipsy soon after dinner, and made himself much worse than he

would have been, by throwing red-hot halfpence out of window in a fire-shovel, for the little boys to scramble for.

This was done at the suggestion of the marquis, who was delighted at witnessing the agility the snobbiculi displayed when their fingers were severely burnt in picking up the coppers. Of course a large crowd was soon collected, who became "receivers-general" of oranges, cakes, nuts, and all sorts of missiles, from the Mitre windows. Then they began to retaliate, by flinging mud and stones at the enemy. Several panes of glass were smashed, and Dennis would have got his master to interfere if he had not been obliged to go to bed brandy-and-watery. As it was, he wisely sent Boots to the Marshal, and told him that the town were behaving exceedingly bad to the gown. The proctors—believing this of course—were quickly on the spot, and the mob was dispersed.

The proctors then proceeded up stairs, in order to take down the names of the gentlemen who, they doubted not, were the parties most to be blamed. They found, however, the room de-

serted, as Dennis had given notice of their approach in time for Ninny and his friends to make their escape by the back staircase.

When the proctors were gone—and they left the inn as soon as they found they could get no information out of Dennis as to the names of the gentlemen who dined in No. 5—they returned and sat down quietly to have a little rational recreation with the dice-box. They soon grew tired of it, however, and, after exchanging I O U's, agreed to have a fly, which was a luxury then recently introduced into Oxford from Cheltenham, and ride down to Sandford to see the boats start.

This proposition was readily acceded to, and in about five minutes the carriage was at the gate. Rattlebones expressed his determination to drive, to which no one objected but Drinkwater. He, poor fellow, had never been so tipsy before, and the wine made him irritable and quarrelsome. He declared he wouldn't go with them unless he was permitted to drive.

Every argument was used to induce him to get inside and sit quietly in the open carriage,

but in vain—drive he would. At last an unwilling assent was given, upon the marquis promising to stand up behind him, and hold him on the box-seat by his coat-tails. Drinkwater, delighted at having gained his point, gave a loud cheer, and rushed up the narrow passage that led to the gate where the fly was standing. He snatched the whip and reins from the astonished driver, and attempted to climb up to the box-seat. He had nearly succeeded in gaining it, when his foot unfortunately slipped, and he fell back upon the curbstone. The other men, who were larking in the yard, arrived at the gate just in time to find the friend with whom they had been thoughtlessly revelling—a corpse.

The shock sobered them instantly. The body was carried into the Mitre, a surgeon sent for, and every thing done that his skill could suggest. The skull, however, was shockingly fractured, and the spine of the neck divided. His death must have been instantaneous.

The whole of the parties — who were sadder but better men ever after this dreadful affair — were rusticated, with the exception of Ninny,

He, as the giver of the party, and a plucked little-go man, was mercilessly expelled by the Dean, Dr. Pertinax Plotter, who, by a strange coincidence, had that very morning received the following note from Lord Wastepaper :

"My dear Dean,

"We are *out*. *I* did the best to keep our party in — but unsuccessfully. I don't care about it for *myself*, as I expected nothing from ministers. I am sorry for you, as the Bishop of Blank is at last dead, and you haven't the slightest chance of being his successor. I am sure, however, this little unpleasantry will not prevent your extending the usual indulgences to my young, but rather wild friend, Nincompoop.

"Your's, my dear Dean,

"As ever,

"WASTEPAPER."

His lordship received the following answer by the next post :

"The Dean of Christ Church presents his

respectful compliments to the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Wastepaper, and begs to inform him that he has been under the unpleasant necessity of expelling the Honourable Augustus Noodledoodle Nincompoop.

"Deanery, Christ Church,

"June 25th."

Ninny left Oxford, and shortly after, through the influence of Lord Wastepaper, whose party was *in* again in a few days, was appointed consul at the North Pole. Soon afterwards, as we have seen from the *Anti-present-state-of-things Gazette,* he succeeded his father, Lord Fuddlehead, as first lord of the scullery, and clerk of the kitchen-range, the duties of which he discharged to the satisfaction of himself and his patrons.

Dr. Plotter died a Dean.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"HI'M very appy has hall that here's hover," said Dusterly, as I finished reading to him the MS. of "The School and College Career of the Honourable A. N. Nincompoop."

"*A maw osey*," said Mrs. P., nodding at Dusterly approvingly; "*a jay day raisons.*"

"Then put hem hin ha puddin, marm," said Dusterly. "Capital heatin, plum-puddin, hain't hit, Broome?"

"I am sure I have good reason to be glad," continued my wife, contemptuously disregarding Dusterly's error; "for, independent of the horrid waste of time and *lickures* at the Shirt and Shotbag, I confess *I* think the papers *tro gro*, and too full of slang to please or interest *les dam*."

"Why, has for *that*," said Dusterly, "hi

don't recollect habove one hoath hin the ole consarn, and when a gentleman — let halone ha hobscure hindividual — his hin a passion, hit comes hout natural like."

"Mrs. P. alludes to the ladies," said I, "and I plead guilty to the charge of inserting much that may justly be termed *slang* — of the better sort, perhaps, inasmuch as it is University slang —but how can I avoid it? If I am to paint my characters to the life, I must observe the Horatian precept,

'Descriptas servare vices' —

for instance, if Mr. Eupheme

'Projicit ampullas et sesquipedalia verba,'

I must put such words into his mouth, or it is not the real Mr. Eupheme who speaks. If, again, an undergraduate, like Mr. Nincompoop,

'Jura neget sibi nata, nihil non arroget armis,'

I *must* make him take the law into his own hands, and thrash an offending townsman, instead of bringing him before the authorities.

—— 'sibi convenientia finge,'

says Flaccus, and I ——"

"Let's ave hall that here hin Henglish, if you hain't no objection," said Dusterly.

"—am determined to follow his advice," I continued, "by letting all my characters speak in the way most natural and agreeable to themselves. If there be any thing objectionable in it, let the blame lie on their shoulders, not on mine."

"Disactly," said Dusterly.

"But I really think," said Broome, "that, however amusing our last papers may prove to those gentlemen who cannot fail to appreciate the fidelity of our descriptions, the ladies, who form no inconsiderable portion of the readers of the *New Monthly*, would not be much entertained by them."

"*Jenny swee par pour oon*," said Mrs. P., "there's too much rigmarole Latin and Greek in 'em for me. A little pure Parisian, Peter, *I* think would be more acceptable to *les dam.*"

"Ow horfully that woman does swear," said Dusterly.

"I confess," said I, "that, next to the consideration, '*hic liber* MŒRET *Sosiis*,' which is impor-

tant to a man who has a sick wife, a large small family, and a much smaller income, my object in publishing my life and times was more particularly to amuse my old masters and other university gentlemen, by recalling to their minds those scenes of which each might truly say for himself

——'pars magna fui.'

If, however, I have inadvertently committed the grave offence—*delictum* immense—of neglecting the ladies, I will endeavour to make the only atonement in my power, by writing a chapter for their especial entertainment.

I believe it is Addison who says, "We know the highest pleasure our minds are capable of enjoying with composure, when we read sublime thoughts communicated to us by men of great genius and eloquence." Now I beg to assure the feminine readers of the *N.M.M.* that, as I have neither genius nor eloquence, they must not expect to receive the "highest pleasure" from me. I shall endeavour to amuse them by recounting a simple but sad tale, and if I fail in exciting a sympathetic feeling with my heroine's

griefs in their kind hearts, they must, in mercy, attribute it to a want of romance, which can scarcely be expected to reside in the breast of a bedmaker. I beg to assure them I have never undertaken the *pathetic line* for the "Minerva press," and have "no connexion with any other house" but the very excellent one of Mr. Colburn.

Having made these prefacial remarks, which I consider absolutely indispensable, I will give a plain and simple narration of

THE FATE OF AGNES FIELD.

In the little village of Merton, within an hour's walk of Oxford, resided one Ephraim Field. He was a cripple, and much deformed in person. Being unfitted for hard labour in the field, which was the common occupation of the sons of the soil of Merton, he was placed by his parents under the tuition of a tailor. The shopboard seemed to fit him, and he seemed born purposely to fit the shopboard. Being the only manufacturer of masculine indispensables in the village, he, of course, got all the custom of the place. Farmers, in those days, regarded the quantity rather than the quality of broadcloth,

and, as Ephraim gave them plenty, both in longitude and latitude, they acquitted him of the crime of cabbaging, common to all tailors, and patronized him accordingly.

Ephraim, moreover, was exceedingly civil when he was sober, and, as he never got fuddled except on a Monday—which, I believe, is a red-letter day with the craft—the odds were six to one in favour of his customer's being treated with civility. When he was "in his cups," or, as he expressed it, when he "had his little hat on," no tailor, pugnacious as tailors naturally are, was more belligerent than he was. Over his ale he first became argumentative, then didactic, and, finally, abusive. He was wont to irritate his companions in the tap of the little public-house by treading on the tender part which every man has in his character. He would tax Giles with being a *porcher*—Robin with being caught in the fact of monopolizing all the eggs for his own use. Bob was accused of selling his master's corn, and Bill with deducting from the weight of the churned butter. These accusations being, somehow or other, partially founded

on fact, produced a great deal of irritation in the parties against whom they were brought. When, however, they threatened to inflict corporal punishment on their accuser, these fine, manly specimens of the labouring classes were deterred from doing so by his saying,

"Ah! you cowards! lick a poor cripple—do."

This appeal to the sympathies of his fellow-men never failed in its effect, and the only punishment inflicted on him was turning him out of the alehouse. This, perhaps, was the severest that could be inflicted upon him, for he lost his beer and pipe, and the village-boys came regularly every Monday evening round the door of the public to see Ephraim turned out, and jeered and pelted him with all sorts of missiles to the door of his cottage; showing their delight by loud cheers at the impotent manifestations of revenge displayed by the poor cripple.

Ephraim had no one at home but a sister, almost as deformed as himself, to console him for the ill-usage he experienced on these occasions. He meditated on this, and resolved to have a wife. To the great surprise of the villagers he

selected the prettiest girl in the place for the object of his addresses, and, to their greater surprise, carried off the prize against all the well-formed, strapping fellows, his rivals.

This is certainly one of the few anomalies in the nature of things, that I, Peter Priggins, could never account for, that the uglier and more deformed a man is, the greater marital success he has with the fair sex. It may seem an extraordinary assertion to make, but it is a fact, that the four ugliest fellows I ever knew in my life married four wives each, every one of them with plenty of money for their marriage portion, and good looks in the bargain. Let any body else account for it—I cannot.

The fruits of this marriage were four fine children; the eldest was a boy, and with him more particularly my story has to do.

Ephraim, junior, was a well-formed, handsome lad, "favouring his mother," as it is termed, more than his father. He displayed great talents in acquiring his A, B, C, but still greater in stitching broadcloths, and singing the popular tunes of his day. This talent was elicited

by the man who dwelt in the next cottage, who was, by profession, a cobbler, or, as he was registered (for he was a freeholder), a cordwainer—but, by trade, a fiddler.

Geoffrey Sewtight—for such was his name—disregarded the apophthegm that " the cobbler should not go beyond his last." He left his wife, whom he had instructed in his profession, and his journeyman, to look after the "heeling art," and betook himself to fairs, races, and rustic hops, where he was a welcome visiter, and earned a great deal of money. He was careful withal, and Mrs. Sewtight always welcomed Geoffrey home, both because she loved him, and because he brought home the wherewithal to purchase her Sunday elegances in dress beyond the capabilities of her poorer neighbours.

Geoffrey was, however, too deep for his wife; for, knowing her taste for finery, and the waste to which such a taste leads, he concealed from her the real amount of his earnings. Her surprise, therefore, was very great when he told her that he intended to send their eldest son, Geoffrey, junior, to London, for the purpose of

apprenticing him to a first-rate boot and shoe maker, who required the enormous sum of £50 for teaching the boy his business, and keeping him in eatables, drinkables, and sleepables for seven years.

Ambition is not confined to royalty.. It is a vice—if such it be — shared by heroes, senators, and public orators, with the smallest artisans in this our sublunary world.

Ephraim Field, senior, was " struck all of a heap," as his wife assured her friends, when he heard that Geoffrey Sewtight was going to bind his son 'prentice in London. To think that he — the tailor of the village — should be obscured by the cobbler! and that cobbler a fiddler at fairs!

He neglected to keep St. Monday for six months, and worked harder than any one would have believed his little misshapen body could have allowed him to work. His wife, appreciating his motives for this unusual abstinence and exertion, aided and abetted him in his task by presiding over the waistcoating department herself, and keeping Ephraim, junior, strictly to the

gaitering and button-sewing-on part of the business — allowing him to practice psalmody over his work, by way of alleviating the severity of his task.

What was Ephraim senior's motive for thus neglecting the alehouse and adhering to the needle as faithfully as the needle adheres to the pole? Simply that he might save enough to enable him to put Ephraim, junior, 'prentice to a first-rate tailor in London, in order that he might eclipse his neighbour's son — Geoffrey Sewtight, junior.

All his laudable efforts, however, did not suffice. Fiddling was more profitable than fitting out the outward man, and the raw material — catgut and horsehair — was not so expensive as broadcloth. Fiddling, moreover, was "ready money," while tailoring was cavalierly treated by long credit!

Ephraim was about to resume his old habits in despair, and had made up his mind to have a regular jollification at the alehouse with all his hard-earned savings, in spite of the exhortations and imprecations of his wiser better-half, when,

fortunately for him and the family, the little church of Merton was vacated by the incumbent for a better living, and given to a gentleman who was remarkably fond of music.

The first Sunday he did the duty, Mr. Gamut was dreadfully shocked at the awful amalgamations of flat, sharp, and natural notes, which proceeded from the singing gallery, "accompanied" by a screeching clarionet and a grunting bassoon. He wisely considered that such a horrible din must be anything but an acceptable mode of offering up praise and thanksgiving, and resolutely determined to offend the singers, who thought — and do think — themselves of much greater importance than the parson, by introducing a hand-organ, and teaching the children of the village a series of plain tunes in which the congregation might join. Of course, the singers left the church; Mr. Gamut, however, was not to be deterred by such a rebellious proceeding. He persevered in teaching the school-children, and his efforts were rewarded by having a choir, which drew larger congregations than had ever been seen in Merton church before.

"The singers," then, seeing their absence was totally uncared for, offered their services to sing seconds and basses, and even to accompany the hand-organ with their instruments; but this Mr. Gamut very properly and very positively declined.

Amongst the most promising pupils, indeed, the most promising of all was Ephraim Field, junior. He was possessed of a very clear and powerful voice. His ear was not only quick in catching and retaining tunes, but in detecting the slightest discords. Mr. Gamut, though he would gladly have kept him to lead his choir at Merton, nobly — for a noble act it was in so enthusiastic a musician — offered to get him a chorister's place at New, Magdalen, or some other college. Old Ephraim would not consent to this. He had been in the habit of expressing his contempt for fiddlers in particular, and musicians in general, and was determined his son should be a tailor — a first-rate tailor, and nothing but a tailor.

Mr. Gamut, though disappointed at first, and displeased at having his liberal offer rejected,

upon consideration, allowed that old Ephraim, like Hercules of old, had displayed great prudence in his "choice." Choristers, he knew, seldom or ever got anything in after-life beyond a paltry chaplaincy, with a small living attached to it; whereas he had heard of several tailors who had amassed large fortunes, ridden in their own carriages, and even had "Sir" prefixed to their names.

Mr. Gamut, therefore, very kindly lent old Ephraim £25 to make up the sum which the first-rate tailor in London required for initiating young Ephraim into the mysteries of cutting-out and using the goose. He also strictly charged the boy to work hard at his trade, but by no means to neglect his music; holding out to him, as an inducement to persevere, the office of parish-clerk *in prospectu.*

Ephraim's first employment, after he was settled in his master's house, and had arranged his mattress under the counter, was to seek for his old neighbour and schoolfellow, Geoffrey Sewtight, who had been in London nearly six months. The meeting was mutually agreeable;

and as their tastes were similar, their intimacy ripened into a warm and lasting friendship. They both worked very hard all day, and saved every shilling they gained by working over hours. The money thus accumulated was spent in attending the theatres, in the gallery of which they became notorious as the noisiest and severest critics, harmonic meetings at musical taverns and spouting clubs, or, as the members themselves call them, "debating societies."

I must not detain the reader by detailing all that occurred to them in the seven years of their apprenticeship. At the end of that period both of them had acquired such skill in their respective trades, that their masters offered them high wages to remain with them as journeymen. Both were so improved in music and singing, that they often earned a good dinner and a guinea by exerting their talents for the amusement of "great public meetings" at some of the great taverns. Both, too, were so much altered in personal appearance, that no one would have recognized in the two well-grown and well-dressed young men the little dirty tailor and cobbler

boys that used to run half-ragged about the little village of Merton.

"Geoffrey," said Ephraim to his friend one Sunday, as they were taking their accustomed walk towards Hampstead Heath, "master has made me a very handsome offer to remain with him as principal cutter-out, and has even hinted at a prospect of a partnership if I go on steadily and well."

"My master, too," replied Geoffrey, "has made me the same offer, only with a condition annexed to it, which renders it impossible for me to accept it."

"Indeed!" inquired Ephraim, "what may it be?"

"Why that I should take unto myself as a wife his disagreeable red-headed daughter. She has been showing her partiality to me for some time, by frequenting the shop more than usual, and bringing me, with her freckled fingers, the best cups of tea, and the thinnest pieces of bread and butter."

"Don't you like her, then?" asked Ephraim.

"You have never seen her," said Geoffrey,

" or you would not ask such a question. Her head is exactly like a new-tiled house-roof, and her eyes resemble a ferret's. Then she sings,

'Oh, come to me, my love,'

a note and a half too sharp, all day long."

"Heugh!" said Ephraim, shuddering — his teeth being set on edge at the very notion. "Give her up, Geoff., there can be no harmony in a wedded life with a woman that sings out of tune."

"I have already resigned the partnership with her and her father, Ephraim, and, as I have saved a little money, I think of setting up in Oxford on my own account."

"It is curious enough that I should have been thinking of doing the same," said Ephraim; "and, as Mr. Gamut, to whom I have repaid the £25 he lent my father to apprentice me, approves of the plan, and offers his assistance if any money is required, I shall go down at once."

"Then," said Geoffrey, "adieu to carrots and the co-partnership! I will go with you, and I'll

tell you what we will do. We will take a small house in Oxford—Mr. Gamut will, doubtless, be responsible for the rent—and will club our little means to furnish a double shop, and a couple of bedrooms. We can get some old woman just to scour and clean up for us; neither of our trades requires any great stock."

"Agreed," said Ephraim, closing the bargain by giving Geoffrey a hearty shake of the hand. "Besides, we may get situations as singing-men in some of the quires, and with such an introduction and attention to our business we may get on pretty well with the University gentlemen."

"There's only one objection that I see," said Geoffrey, shaking his head.

"What's that?" inquired Ephraim.

"Why! we can't stand tick," said Geoffrey.

"True," said Ephraim; "but we will try our luck, and help one another along."

The two young men then went to "The Spaniards," and had their frugal pint of porter. They afterwards returned to London, and apprized their masters of their intentions. Each

parted with his young man with regret, sincere wishes for his welfare, and a small present. Miss Carrots, we regret to say, tossed her red head in a very unbecoming manner, and refused to wish Geoffrey "good-bye;" at which he was not very much grieved.

On the following morning, at an early hour, having packed up their clothes and forwarded them by waggon, they set out to walk down home. They reached Merton on the second day, and presented themselves to the eyes of their astonished and delighted parents. On the Sunday following they surprised the natives and Mr. Gamut by singing an anthem in a way that had never been heard in Merton church before. The congregation were delighted with the performances of their young friends, and the reverend gentleman was so pleased, that after church was over he spent the whole evening in old Geoffrey's cottage in singing sacred music, and left them late at night, with a promise to assist them in their plans of setting up in business, and to obtain for them appointments in a college choir.

Mr. Gamut was as good as his word. In the course of the week following, in the window of a small house in Pennyfarthing Street, appeared two cards—one bore in large letters the words:

EPHRAIM FIELD,
TAILOR AND CAP AND GOWN MAKER.
from
LONDON.

The other was inscribed:

GEOFFREY SEWTIGHT,
BOOT AND SHOE MAKER,
from
LONDON.

Within might be seen, on one side, the sleeve-board, goose, and other paraphernalia of the tailoring department; and on the other, brad-awls, wax-ends, lasts, and boot-trees, with other implements necessary for enabling gentlemen and ladies to walk in comfort and respectability.

In a short time afterwards, two of the singing-men of St. Mark's College, who were fond of sacrificing to the "God of Beer" — if there be such a Cerevisian deity — in returning from

Sandford, where they had been pouring plentiful libations to their favourite divinity down their own thirsty throats, fell into the lock-pool at Iffley, and, as neither could assist the other, were both drowned.

Their places, through the interest of Mr. Gamut, were filled by Ephraim and Geoffrey. The talents displayed by these young men soon introduced them to the lovers of music in the University and city, and their quiet and respectable demeanour gained them many friends and customers.

At the end of four or five years they had, by prudence and economy, laid up sufficient money to justify them in marrying. Ephraim had been for some time engaged to a respectable young woman, a governess in a family near Oxford, where his services in taking a part in private concerts had been often required. Geoffrey had also lost his heart to a buxom lass, the daughter of a farmer near Merton.

The house in Pennyfarthing Street was given up. Ephraim took a large and showy house in the High Street, and furnished it perhaps too

handsomely; but his future bride had been used to handsome furniture, and he thought his means justified him in going to a little additional expense on her account. Geoffrey removed to a comfortable place in Broad Street, and was satisfied with fitting it up neatly but plainly for his "future," who knew nothing of the elegances, and cared only for the real comforts, of a home.

They were both married on the same day, in the church of their native village, by their friend and patron, Mr. Gamut, who composed and set to music an epithalamium, which was sung upon the joyful occasion by the gentlemen of the choir of St. Mark's. Their exertions were rewarded by a seat at the wedding-feast which had been prepared at Mr. Gamut's expense in a barn belonging to the newly-married Mrs. Sewtight's father.

I must now narrate the events of many years in a very few sentences. Both our friends had prospered in business beyond their expectations. Mrs. Sewtight was in the habit of presenting her husband with an additional branch to the

family olive-tree every year regularly. Those Malthusian abettors, measles, small-pox, and hooping-cough had blighted and destroyed a few of the tenderest offshoots; but nine vigorous arms still remained attached to the parent trunk.

Mrs. Field, who was naturally weak and delicate in constitution, and had been rendered still more so by the sedentary nature of her early employments, gave birth to several sickly children, all of whom survived but a few days after their birth, with the exception of one—the eldest.

Agnes, as she was called, after her mother, was now about sixteen years of age. She was tall, but not too thin; and exceedingly graceful in her manner and deportment. Her face was one of those lovely ones that are seldom seen but on canvass; indeed, it closely resembled the Magdalen's of Correggio. Her skin was so clear as to permit the blue veins to be seen distinctly under its surface. Her fair hair, which fell in natural tresses on her neck, was parted on her forehead, and confined there by a plain band of velvet. When perfectly quiescent, she

might have been said to be too pale; but, upon the slightest excitement, either mental or bodily, a lovely colour pervaded her cheeks, resembling in its tints those faint but beautiful colours that are seen only in the landscapes of Claude Lorraine, when the early sun is represented as just rising to bestow his brightness and his warmth upon the earth.

Upon this fair creature's education Mrs. Field had spared no pains. Her hours, by days and nights, were consumed in meditating plans for her benefit; being pure in heart and simple-minded herself, it is no wonder that her daughter resembled her in those qualities; being sincerely religious, without the outward affectation of superior piety, she instilled into her child's guileless bosom those seeds of religious veneration for the Christian religion which bade fair to ripen into the fruits of an incorruptible faith. Being also a woman of considerable classical acquirements, and thoroughly acquainted with the languages of the continent—a knowledge which she had gained by spending four or five years abroad with the family whom

she first served as nursery governess—she was fully competent to instruct her child in those indispensable branches of knowledge—for such they are considered in these days of dear schools and cheap literature.

In one point, both mother and daughter closely resembled each other. They both entertained an enthusiastic passion for poetry and tales of fiction. The imaginary sorrows of fictitious heroes and heroines excited their sympathies far more forcibly than the real but unpoetic griefs of those who dwelt with and around them. They lived in a little world of their own creation. An indulgence in sedentary pursuits, and an unwillingness to go abroad and associate with those of their own grade of life, to whom from education and habits they were unsuited, produced a species of morbid sensibility, which rendered them unfit for the common duties of their station, and tended to weaken still more their far from healthy and vigorous constitutions.

In music, Agnes and her mother both excelled; but it was in the purest and chastest music of the schools of Italy and Germany; the

simple and beautiful ballads of their own country were neglected, as not giving scope enough for that morbid sensibility to which I have before alluded. Ephraim, therefore, who was fond of a plain English, Scotch, or Irish melody, in vain attempted to instil a taste for his favourite airs into his daughter's breast. The consequence of this was, that, excepting for the simple but sublime strains of Handel, Haydn, and other composers of sacred music, the father and child had no common love or interest, as far as their attachment to music went.

In Geoffrey's family, with whom alone Agnes and her mother associated familiarly, for "Old Lang Syne's" sake, the necessary business and occupations of real life produced very different results. Mrs. Sewtight was an uneducated—or rather one-sixteenth-educated woman—who looked upon a knowledge of housewifery, plain needlework, and plain cooking as the *summum bonum* of human acquirements. The female children, therefore, were sent to school, when they were old enough, for a year or two's instruction in writing, reading,

and samplers, and then set to housework and stitchery at home.

The boys were also drilled in commercials, and bound to some useful trade as soon as they were old enough to wield the instruments of it. The eldest boy, Reuben—so named after Mr. Gamut, the founder of the family prosperity—was, at Ephraim's express request, placed under his care and brought up to his trade. He intended, as he had no son of his own, to leave his flourishing and profitable business to the son of his earliest friend.

Reuben and Agnes were not thrown so much together as two young persons, living under the same roof, might naturally be supposed to be. Excepting at meal-times, Mrs. Field and her daughter were rarely seen by the rest of the family; their hours were spent in the study of Agnes, where books, music, and drawing, occupied their whole time.

Reuben looked upon both of them as beings of a superior order; and when joked about the "pretty Agnes," by the men and boys employed in the business, resented the bare mention of her

name in conjunction with his own, in a manner that made them hesitate to repeat their witty observations. No intimacy, beyond sitting in the same pew, and reading out of the same prayer-book in St. Mary's church, and taking an evening's walk round Christ Church meadow on a Sunday, had taken place between them. To say that Reuben did not think Agnes very pretty, and too ladylike for him to dream of as a wife, and that Agnes did not think Reuben a fine, stout, superior young man for his situation, but without a spark of enthusiasm or poetry in his composition, would be false.

Each liked the other very well, but they had not seen enough of each other, nor had they any feelings in common to inspire them with sufficient passion or attachment for each other, to produce a bud of affection which might be cherished and ripened into love.

Geoffrey and Ephraim were not so very intimate as they had been; for when the former saw himself surrounded by so large a family of children, dependant entirely upon himself for support, he gave up his situation as a singing-

man at St. Mark's, and ceased to assist at concerts and musical meetings. He found that his business required all his attention, and that music parties and bootmaking did not harmonize together. He therefore wisely resigned the more agreeable, to adhere to the more profitable occupation of the two. Ephraim, on the contrary, finding that his foreman carried on the business quite to the satisfaction of his customers, and knowing that his wife and daughter were not particularly anxious for his company in the study, increased the circle of his associates, and gave himself up entirely to the enjoyment of melody and the good things of this world.

Among the new companions of Ephraim, and to whom he had been introduced at a glee-club, which held its harmonic meetings at the houses of the members in succession, was one Mr. Humidus Boskey, a gentleman, by profession an apothecary, by practice a comic songster, and a frequenter of low public-houses. The medical profession in Oxford is more rigidly kept to its legitimate uses than it is in other towns generally. The apothecary and accoucheur does not

presume to intrude into the practice of the surgeon, nor has the surgeon bad taste enough to prescribe as a physician. Mr. Humidus Boskey, had he stuck to his business, as he ought, might have realized a handsome income by compounding and dispensing medicines, spreading plasters, and manipulating boluses and babbies; but he had a soul above rhubarb, and disdained the healthy but laborious occupation of pounding drugs in a mortar. He left such low and degrading pursuits to his assistant and half-starved apprentice; and on the nag that ought to have jogged from door to door, to enable him legally to charge for "medicines and attendance," he charged the imaginary foes of his country as a yeomanry-cavalry officer, and the fences of the farmers as a hunter of foxes and a courser of hares.

Mr. Humidus Boskey, moreover, was a shot, and kept a brace of pointers—on the victuals which his apprentice, who was to be treated as "one of the family," ought to have had—and a brace of spaniels for cover-shooting. He got permission to shoot over a great deal of unpre-

served ground from the farmers, whom he attended — or rather professed to attend — by giving them a plain dinner and a hearty reception, and sending them home as intoxicated as himself on market days. Enormous were the powers of imbibition possessed by Mr. Humidus Boskey! Beer, wine, brandy, gin, punch, or toddy, it was all one to him — he drank and sung, then sung and drank again. He not only drank himself, but was the cause of drinking in others. His " Come, just one more glass, and I'll sing you a new comic song," was irresistible. The *pressé* invariably yielded to the " voice of the charmer," and resigned himself to melody, grog, and intoxication.

It is a great misfortune to be able to sing a good song—especially a comic one—to any man who is not perfectly independent in his circumstances and unmarried, or paid for doing it professionally. His company is courted, and habits of jollifying and keeping late hours are engendered, which generally prove fatal to success in business and family comforts. Mrs. Boskey used to say that her husband was "an angel

abroad, but a devil at home:" that he was the soul of harmony in the houses of other people; but the moment he came into his own home, "hung up his fiddle behind the door," and caused discords most inharmonious. Such metaphorical modes of describing the inattentions of company-loving husbands are, I believe, common to neglected wives of the class in which Mrs. Boskey ranked. It certainly was trying for her to know, that while she and her six children were forced to put up with short commons of breast-of-mutton pie for dinner, and untoasted single Gloucester for supper, her husband was revelling in "fish, soup, and hot joints every day," and broiled bones and other devilries every night.

One little sketch of Mrs. Boskey's nightly comforts—which I beg leave to state is no caricature—will give the reader an insight into the manner and character of her harmonious husband.

The clock has long since struck twelve. The children are all in bed, and the house is perfectly quiet. Silence is unbroken, except by

the painful and monotonous tickings of the aforesaid clock, and a weak half-stifled cry from "the babby," which, being put to bed with the trolloping maid of all-work, wakes up now and then, and misses its mother. The mother sighs when she hears the cry, but dares not go to her infant, lest her husband should come home in her absence, and be kept waiting at the door for a few minutes. She sits half asleep, with her feet on the kitchen fender, before a little bit of fire, not sufficient to afford warmth to any thing but the kettle which is placed upon it, to be kept hot for Mr. Boskey's final tumbler of "bran'y-a-war'er," as he pronounces it when tipsy. She is enveloped in a large cloak, and her arms are wrapped up in her apron, to ensure that warmth which the fire refuses to give her. On the little table by her side are several little dip-candle ends in a snuffer-tray, which she burns in succession by the help of the tin save-all which stands in the one brass candlestick. *The* book is also near her, in which she has been searching for consolation and hope in her bitterness, until the fatigues of the day have

overcome her, and her eyes refuse to do their office.

She listens habitually to every step that passes, hoping it may be her husband's. The door of the kitchen is left open, that the first sounds of his footsteps may reach her, and that she may not fail to hear the night-bell ring by which Mr. Boskey chooses to make his return known to her, in order that the neighbours may fancy he has been called up in the night to a patient. The sugar and the bottle of brandy stand also ready for the manufacture of the glass of grog, which he facetiously designates as his "nightcap."

Slowly and lingeringly pass the minutes. Nature exhausted bids her seek repose, but she dares not. Slumber, however, she does, against her will, but rouses herself from the painful state of drowsiness by poking the few sparks that remain in the grate, putting a fresh bit of candle on the saveall, and taking a few hurried steps along the passage to the street-door. A step approaches, but the tread is the firm footfall of sobriety. Another — the rattle of a lantern,

and the calling of the hour, announce the watchman. She returns to her chair, and tries to read again. Again she falls asleep, but to rouse herself again to a painful consciousness that she is committing a conjugal offence.

At length a confused shuffling of feet reaches her ears, mingled with loud laughing, singing, and screeching. She listens, and distinctly hears her husband singing the last verse of his last comic song, in a thick, drunken tone, and his companions hurrahing and applauding him. Then comes a chorus of "We won't go home till morning"—"Needles and pins, when a man's married his sorrow begins," or some such suitable melody. The night-bell is then rung fiercely, and Mrs. Boskey hearing the "good night, old fellow"—"good night, my boys—*re*markable pleasant evening—very," and the sound of the retreating footsteps of the roysterers, who have discharged the duties of good fellowship by seeing their companion safely at his own door and clinging to his own paling, quickly opens the door with "Is that you, my

love? You're *rather* late, ain't you?" To which Mr. Humidus replies, snappishly,

"Late, marm, what do *you* mean by late? And if I am late, what's that to you? (Hiccup.) A medical man, marm, can't call his time his own. (Hiccup.)"

Mrs. Boskey, knowing it to be useless to remonstrate, bolts the door, and precedes her husband to the kitchen. He manages to follow her by zigzagging and leaning for support, first against the left-hand side of the passage, and then against the right. Then holding on by the back of a chair, he stares, first at the clock and then at his wife, with that obliquity of vision peculiar to intoxication, and in a savage, thick tone, inquires,

"Well, marm! how much longer am I to stand here, eh, marm? (Hiccup.) Where's my bran'y-a-war'er? Why the devil, marm, don't you make my bran'y-a-war'er? (Hiccup.)"

"Yes, my dear," replies Mrs. Boskey, in meek tones, "I was only just going—"

"That's always your excuse, marm—always;

and a very lame excuse it is. (Hiccup.) But I beg to ask you once more, marm, *are* you going to make my bran'y-a-war'er? Answer me *that*, marm. (Hiccup.) I'll not stand it any longer, marm."

To prove his assertion, Mr. Humidus throws down his hat in a passion, and with difficulty seats himself in his chair. Mrs. Boskey mixes his glass of brandy and water as quickly as possible, and then inquires—

"Shall I go to bed now, my dear, or shall you want any thing else?"

"Want any thing else? What do you mean, marm? Go to bed? Am I to go to bed in my boots? (Hiccup.) Call this bran'y and war'er? I'm afraid, Mrs. Boskey, you're drunk, marm, and can't see. (Hiccup.)"

Mrs. Boskey, knowing what this means, adds a little strength to the draught, and, pointing to the bootjack, which she had placed ready for use, begs to know if he will draw his boots off now.

"Boots off, marm? How can you be fool enough to suppose that any man, after a hard

day's work, can see such a very small hole in such a very diminutive bootjack as that? D—n the thing, take it away, marm!"

He, however, saves her the trouble of doing so by kicking it violently to the further side of the kitchen. Mrs. Boskey then tremblingly asks if she shall pull them off for him.

"In course, marm, unless you wish me to sleep in them," replies Boskey, with difficulty raising one of his legs by clinging firmly to the seat of the chair with both his hands. Mrs. Boskey then, after soiling her fair fingers with a commixture of blacking and mud, with difficulty draws off the boots, and gets abused for nearly destroying his equilibrium and precipitating his oscillating body on the ground.

"Has any body called to-day since I've been out?"

"Only the milkman, Humidus. He says he won't supply us any longer unless we pay up the last five weeks' score."

"Oh! he does—does he? (Hiccup.) And why the devil, marm, don't you pay him then?"

"Why you know, my dear, you have given me no money."

"It's false, marm! it's a lie! it was only this very morning I gave you all the money in the till. Eh, marm?"

"Yes, my dear, just three halfpence, which a little boy paid for an ounce of Epsom salts."

"No matter what it was *for*. What's become of *that*, I should like to know? Your extravagance is unbearable! (Hiccup.)"

"Then the baker says he can't trust any longer. He must have his money — you know he needs it."

"*Kneads* it? *kneads* it? not so bad that, ah! ah! Mrs. B., you're a female wag. (Hiccup.) Capital pun, by Jove!—book it for to-morrow's club. Take a little bran'y-a-war'er, Mrs. B., to christen your first joke. Ain't there any left? Well, never mind, let's go to bed, and d—n the baker!"

Mrs. Humidus leads the way with the last bit of dip, and Mr. Humidus, relying on the friendly aid of a stout banister, manages to stumble up stairs and scramble into bed, where,

in less than one minute, the somnolency caused by "potations pottle deep" falls upon him, and proclaims its victory over its victim by triumphant snores. Mrs. Boskey undresses herself, and fetches the baby from the maid's room. Fondling and caressing it, she cries herself to sleep by the side of its inanimate father.

Such scenes as these were of almost nightly occurrence, and, though Mrs. Boskey, like the eels which grew used to being skinned, was accustomed to such brutal treatment, her health and spirits suffered severely. Her female friends, to whom she sometimes revealed the cause of her ill-health and melancholy looks, gave but little credit to her statement, but thought the fault must be all on her side, as Mr. Humidus Boskey was "such a funny and agreeable person, and *so* good-tempered!" Appearances, as the copy-books say, are so deceitful!

With this funny and agreeable gentleman Ephraim Field gradually grew too intimate. But a few years before he would have been disgusted with him. A love of drinking and good fellowship, however, had gradually grown upon

him, and he was glad to find any associate who would sit with him, and make one at a little snug dinner, especially if he could take a part in a duet or glee.

To Mr. Humidus the acquaintance of Ephraim was invaluable, and he cultivated it perseveringly. His finances, owing to his neglect of business and his large family, were generally in a suspicious state, and his exchequer empty. Ephraim, whenever he saw him dull and heard him singing half a tone too flat, divined the cause, and, as he had, as he thought, plenty of money, and but very few calls upon him, freely allowed his new-found friend to draw upon him for £20 or £30 at a time, and was satisfied by an I O U for the amount, and the sight of Boskey's reinvigorated spirits.

Mrs. Field and Agnes were not even aware that Ephraim had formed an intimacy with Mr. Humidus; nor, if they had been aware of it, would they have been shocked at it, as, from their retired mode of life, they knew little or nothing of their neighbours but by name. Mrs. Sewtight, also, was too much engaged with

scouring the house and her children to listen to or talk tittle-tattle. Mrs. Field, therefore, remained in blissful ignorance of her husband's gradual degradation in society. She was aware that he kept later hours than formerly, but was rather pleased at it than not, as it gave her more time for reading and music with her daughter.

It is possible, had Mr. Gamut been alive, that Ephraim might have been saved in good time from the ruin which impended over him. He, however, met with his death from his inordinate passion for music.

At one of the grand commemorations, when a concert on a large scale is given in the theatre at Oxford, Mr. Gamut, being one of the stewards, was exceedingly anxious that every thing should go off well. On the morning of the first day's concert, the professional who played the triangle was too much indisposed to attend. Mr. Gamut, not knowing where to find another professional triangler, volunteered to undertake the instrumental parts for the missing man. Unfortunately, he was placed immediately below an

enthusiastic and vigorous kettle-drum player. This gentleman, in the midst of an overture, in trying to give additional impetus to a grand "crash," missed his instrument, and hit poor Mr. Gamut so severe a blow on the head as to knock him, music-stool and all, from the summit to the bottom of a very lofty orchestra.

Every body said the "crash" was the grandest that had ever been heard within the walls of the theatre, though no one was aware that the grand effect had been produced by the fall of Mr. Gamut and his stool just in the right bar of the loudest movement, except himself and the kettle-drum-player. Gamut was delighted with the way in which the overture went off, and, if an *encore* had been called, would, probably, have volunteered a second tumble to have ensured the same success. He felt but little from his bruises as long as the concert lasted, but, when the excitement was over, he fell seriously ill, and soon "closed his performances," as he would have expressed it himself, "in a solo in *be flat*."

"Ephraim," said Geoffrey Sewtight to his

early friend, meeting him in the High Street, as he was carrying a green baize bag full of boots, shoes, pumps, and slippers to some gentleman's rooms—"Ephraim, I have been too busy to see much of you lately, but have been very anxious to see you on several subjects."

"Then pray walk in doors, Geoff., we can't communicate here in the street," replied Ephraim; for, to say the truth, he was rather shocked at the green bag and apron of Geoffrey.

"I haven't time, now," said Sewtight; "I am always as good as my word. I promised to bring these goods home at twelve o'clock this day, and St. Mary's is just on the point of striking. I will call, however, as I return."

Geoffrey was as "good as his word" in this instance, and, upon entering the elegantly-furnished dining-room of Ephraim, drew a deep sigh and a chair towards the fire.

"Take some lunch," said Ephraim, "a sardine and a glass of Bordo."

"Thank you," said Geoffrey, "but I prefer a slice of bread and cheese, and a glass of ale."

"Well, what is it you wish to say?" inquired

Ephraim, after he had supplied his friend with the luncheon to which he showed what he considered a plebeian preference.

"Nothing agreeable, Ephraim, and therefore I would willingly leave it unsaid; but my real regard for you tells me I should be wrong to hide from you the injurious reports I have heard of you."

"Injurious reports of me!" said Ephraim, amazed, and quaffing off his Bourdeaux.

"Yes," said Geoffrey. "I heard this morning that a check of your's, for a small amount, too, had been presented at your bankers by that disgrace to his profession, Mr. Humidus Boskey, and refused, as there were no 'effects.'"

"The deuce!" said Ephraim.

"Yes," continued Geoffrey, "and that a bill at three months for £500 had been noted and returned."

"Oh! that's true enough;—the fact is, I leave all that sort of thing to my foreman, and the stupid fellow neglected to enter it in the bill-book; but it's of no consequence, my dear Geoff., I've ten or twelve thousand pounds on my books at this moment," said Ephraim.

"I had rather they were in your banker's iron safe," replied Geoffrey, "but this, though bad enough, may be remedied. I have cash lying by me, and can supply you until you get in some of your bills. What I have to draw your attention to, and I am surprised you have not observed it yourself, is the evidently dangerous state of your wife. She called on us with Agnes yesterday, and if she is not in a rapid decline I am mistaken. I never saw a person so altered in my life."

"Oh! you're wrong, depend on it," said Ephraim; "she was always delicate, you know —she shuts herself up too much, I must get her out more."

"I hope I am wrong," replied Geoffrey; "but I thought it my duty to mention these things to you. Keep more at home, Ephraim, and look more after your family and your business; give up singing, and that Mr. Humidus Boskey. Excuse my boldness, Ephraim, and command my services at all times."

Thus saying, Geoffrey laid down his knife and

the tankard, shook his friend feelingly by the hand, and resumed his green bag.

"Well, Geoffrey, I'll borrow a thousand till I get my bills in," said Ephraim; "for, to tell the truth, I have overdrawn rather largely at my banker's."

As soon as Geoffrey was gone, Ephraim rang the bell violently. He told the maid who answered it, to send young Geoffrey to him immediately.

Greatly to the surprise of the young man and the whole establishment, the day-book, journal, ledger, cash, and order-books were ordered to be carried into the dining-room. Ephraim brooded over the contents of each for some time, surveyed the "silver-plate, cut-glass, and decanters," on his table, cast his eyes over the rich furniture of the room, and shut the books with a deep sigh. He then leant back in his easy-chair, and fell into a profound reverie, from which he was aroused by the entrance of Mr. Humidus Boskey, who came into the room singing the chorus of a drinking-song, and suiting

the action to the word by pouring out and tossing off a tumbler of Bourdeaux.

"I am glad you've called," said Ephraim; "I was going to send for you professionally — not for myself, for I never was ill in my life, except from a little over-indulgence, which a little brandy and soda-water always remedies. I am told that Mrs. Field is looking ill. You have not been introduced to her, but you will oblige me by allowing me to introduce you now. Observe, I shall not present you as a medical man, but as a private friend. Examine her appearance, and tell me candidly the result of your examination."

Mrs. Field and Agnes were summoned into the dining-room, and introduced to Mr. Humidus, who, being really clever in his profession, and very gentlemanly in his manners in the early part of the day, insinuated himself into the good graces of the ladies; and, without her knowing it, managed to put a great many professional inquiries to Mrs. Field, which gave him an insight into her real bodily ailments.

When the ladies retired, Mr. Humidus offer-

ing his hand to Ephraim, begged him not to be shocked, but bear the intelligence, which he felt it his duty to communicate, like a man.

Mr. Humidus, then, in a very feeling manner, for which no one who had seen him in his cups would have given him credit, explained to his friend his reasons for believing that consumption was doing its cruel task rapidly, and that Mrs. Field's days had dwindled to a very short span.

"Then," said Ephraim, "I must request your constant attendance professionally. Call in this evening, but remember—" and Ephraim shook his head negatively, and put his hand to his lips imitatory of a person taking his glass of wine.

"On my honour—yes!" said Humidus, as he left the room.

Ephraim went up stairs to the study, where he found his wife lying on a sofa, and looking weary and exhausted.

"Agnes, my dear, you look ill."

"I am not well, I believe," replied his wife; "but I cannot say what ails me. I feel listless and unwilling to exert myself. My appetite is not very good, and my nights are sleepless. I

confine myself and that dear child too much. We must take more exercise."

"I was going to recommend your doing so," said Ephraim; "but as you feel ill, I wish you would consult my friend Mr. Boskey professionally—he is coming here this evening."

"Oh, yes, with great pleasure," replied Mrs. Field; "I like what I have seen of him very much. He is quiet, and gentlemanly in his manners, and seems to be a very considerate and feeling man."

Having gained his point, and chatted with his daughter, Ephraim returned to the inspection of his books, and the result was not quite satisfactory. He dined with his wife and child, and stayed at home all the evening, expecting Humidus every minute. At length he arrived, but not until after Mrs. Field had retired to bed.

Ephraim informed him of this fact, and Humidus nodding a "never mind" to his friend, took a chamber-candle, lit it, and walked pretty steadily up stairs.

Mrs. Field, who was expecting him, extended

her wrist to him that he might feel her pulse, put out her tongue, and told him all her ailments in succession.

Humidus said nothing, but held tight to the bedpost with one hand, while he went through the examination of the pulse with the other: and then making a kind of lurch towards the door, muttered to Ephraim loudly enough to be heard by Agnes and her mother,

"DEAD in less than a week, by jingo!"

CHAPTER XIX.

The sudden tidings of her nearly approaching dissolution, thus thoughtlessly announced to her by the half-intoxicated Boskey, was a dreadful shock to Mrs. Field. None of us, however well prepared to die, can hear the sudden summons to our grave without a shudder. Mrs. Field, though she had felt unwell and weak for some months, had no notion that her sickness was unto death. When, then, she heard the sentence of death within seven days pronounced against her, a sudden tremour pervaded her limbs, a suffocating feeling arose in her throat, and a cold, clammy perspiration burst from every pore of her body. She closed her eyes and muttered a few inaudible words in prayer, then, opening them again, and, fixing them on her child,

uttered aloud, "and in thy mercy look down upon and protect my child."

Agnes, however, heard not the kind prayer offered in her behalf. The sudden news of her parent's danger—of the death of the only being whom she had loved with that intensity of affection which a disposition like her's was calculated to cherish, struck like a dagger to her heart. She stood with her arms extended, and her eyeballs starting from their sockets, gazing at her mother as though she would penetrate and examine her frame to ascertain the truth of the horrid announcement she had heard. Suddenly perception failed her—her eyes remained open, but she saw not; her brain seemed to whirl round and round — a feeling of intense sickness came upon her, and she fell with a loud shriek by the side of her mother, just as she had uttered the prayer for her safety and protection.

"Agnes! my poor child! the blow has been too much for you," said Mrs. Field, raising herself in bed and rubbing the temples of her daughter.

She was cold, icy cold, and it suddenly struck

her mother that the shock had killed her. She sprung from her bed, shrieking, "My child! my child! He has killed my child!" and, rushing to the bell-pull, fell ere she reached it.

Her screams reached the ears of her husband and Mr. Boskey, who were descending the stairs. Ephraim hurried back to the bedroom and found his wife on the ground, bleeding from her mouth, perfectly insensible, and his daughter swooning on the bed.

Just as he had raised the former from the floor, and placed her on the bed by the side of her child, Mr. Boskey came staggering into the room, and, seizing the bedpost for support, hiccupped out, "Broke a vessel on the lungs—all up."

"Stand aside, beast!" said Ephraim; "this is your doing."

Mr. Boskey tried to obey, but in the attempt let go of his support and fell upon the carpet, whence, in a sitting posture, with his back supported by the bedstead, he began to defend himself against the "very wicked and false insinuations" of Ephraim.

Field was justly irritated by the brutal conduct of Humidus, and, seizing him by the collar, dragged him to the staircase, and kicked him from the top of the stairs to the bottom. He then rang the bedroom-bell and despatched the frightened maid for another medical man. During her absence his agony was indescribable. He first of all stood silently gazing at the crimson blood which flowed in jets from his wife's mouth. He then examined the marble looks of his child, and, thinking it might be in his power to recover her, sprinkled her copiously with water from the ewer.

After a few minutes, Agnes, heaving a deep sigh, opened her eyes to gaze on her mother, but the moment she saw her face and the bedclothes covered with her blood, with a shudder, she relapsed into a state of syncope.

Poor Ephraim stood wringing his hands, almost maddened at the sad sight before him. He called on each alternately, in the most endearing terms. He then began to utter every vile reproach his mind could suggest, and his tongue utter against Mr. Humidus, as the cause of all his miseries.

A long time seemed to have elapsed—seconds seemed minutes, minutes hours — since he had sent for further aid, and it had not arrived. He looked out of the window down the long vista of the High Street, but no one was in view. He leaned over the balustrades in hopes of hearing some one below, but nothing was to be heard but the stertorous breathing of Mr. Boskey, who lay half stunned with his fall, and beastly drunk, on the mat at the bottom of the stairs. In a rage, Ephraim rushed down and dragged the doctor, who had not power to resist, into the street, and gave him in charge of a watchman to be conveyed home. Scarcely had he closed the door before Dr. Drybones arrived, guided by the servant. This gentleman, who was tall, thin, and very precise in his manner, but enjoying the reputation of the cleverest man out of London, took off his clerical-looking hat from the top of his neatly-curled brown wig, and, after carefully smoothing the nap of the beaver, deposited it with great care on the hall-table, and put his gloves, which he drew slowly from his hands, inside the crown, and laid his gold-headed cane across the brims.

Ephraim, who was fearful his wife would expire ere they could reach her room, begged and prayed Dr. Drybones to make haste. The doctor, however, never hurried himself, or lost his temper, or his dignity: making a very polite bow, he assured him he was quite ready to follow him, now that he had seen "the article of dress which protected his head placed ready for immediate resumption on his return."

The moment he entered the chamber his stiffness of figure relaxed, and his apathy left him. Nature asserted her empire over formality. Though used, from many years' practice, to scenes of disaster and woe, never had he seen one more disastrous or woful than the one before him. Mrs. Field was dead, and her features were beginning to assume the pallor and rigidity of death. Her face looked paler, probably from the mass of clotted gore with which the pillow on which her head lay was encrusted. By her side lay the lovely form of Agnes, resembling more closely some finely-chiselled statue than an animate being.

Dr. Drybones placed his fingers on the pulse

of Mrs. Field, and, turning to her husband with a tear trickling down his thin and furrowed cheek, in tones of deep sympathy observed —

"The mother, sir, I regret to say, is beyond the reach of human aid; but the daughter, I trust, may soon be restored to you again."

Then, such is the force of habit, he took his gold snuff-box from his waistcoat-pocket, and applied a copious pinch to his nostrils, as if he were waiting for Ephraim to recover from his sobbing, sufficiently to make some answer to his remarks.

Ephraim, however, was too much stupified by his unexpected loss to be able to make any observation in reply. The doctor therefore beckoned to the servant, who was sobbing as though her heart would burst, and with her help conveyed the unconscious Agnes to her own bedchamber. While the girl, by his orders, was undressing her young mistress, he wrote a few words with his pencil, and when she had placed Agnes in bed, despatched her with them to a neighbouring apothecary. She soon returned, bringing with her the prescribed remedies.

But not to dwell upon this sad scene, let it suffice to say that, by the kind attention and great skill of her physician, Agnes recovered sufficiently, some weeks after her mother's remains had been consigned to earth, to accompany her father to the Isle of Wight. There, in the quiet and healthy village of Shanklin, her nerves partially recovered their tone, and the hue of convalescence returned to her cheeks. Those pursuits, however, which she had been accustomed to share with the mother, were still distasteful to her. Poetry had lost its charms, and the notes of her harp grated harshly on her ear. In vain did she endeavour to sing the songs her lost parent had taught her; her voice faltered, and its tones suddenly ceased, like the fitful whisperings of the summer's gale, which ceases to blow ere the smooth surface of the lake is ruffled by its breath. Her father watched her with tender care, and by inducing her to visit the lovely scenes with which the Isle of Wight abounds, gradually prevented her thoughts from preying on her mind.

During their absence, Geoffrey Sewtight ex-

amined into Ephraim's affairs, and finding it impossible for him to go on, unless he got all, or the greater part of his bills paid—which is not a very easy matter with Oxford customers—called his creditors together. These gentlemen, when they found there would be enough to pay their demands in full, and a surplus for Ephraim to start again with, consented to strike a friendly docket against him.

Ephraim was made a bankrupt, and, as he had paid them twenty shillings in the pound, all his creditors signed his certificate. When he returned to Oxford, he resumed his business and his former premises. By Geoffrey's advice he disposed of all his useless furniture, plate, and Bordeaux wines, hired a respectable-looking housekeeper, and let off part of his house in lodgings.

This was absolutely necessary; as the surplus left him, after paying all his debts, was but small; and the trade of tailoring requires "long tick," especially in Oxford. Ephraim, however, got on well, as he was now his own foreman, and kept his own books; he also eschewed glee-

clubs, harmonious meetings, and the society of Mr. Humidus Boskey. It did not, indeed, require much exertion on Ephraim's part to effect this latter arrangement, as Mr. Boskey carefully avoided meeting his former friend and associate, lest he should produce and call upon him to pay sundry sums scrawled upon little scraps of paper with initials I O U before them.

Mr. Humidus Boskey was not long fated to amuse his friends abroad, and abuse his wife at home. He was in the habit of attending the Ashdown-park coursing meetings every year. Upon one of these occasions, when he had left his patients in the lurch to look at the greyhounds in the leash, he started the evening before the meeting to be ready in the morning with his sorry hack recovered from the fatigues of a journey of twenty-two miles. He put up as usual at the house of one of his brother medicals in the neighbourhood of Lambourn. This gentleman was, like Humidus, addicted to glees and goblets of grog; they therefore agreed remarkably well together, and Humidus had his "bran'y-a-war'ers" to his heart's content.

While upon the ground, and in the midst of some of the finest courses in Compton-bottom, a message reached Humidus stating that a lady—one of his few and best patients—required his immediate attendance. He despatched the messenger back with an assurance that he would return to Oxford as quickly as possible. His friend, "on hospitable thoughts intent," insisted on his dining before he set out upon his long journey. Humidus consented, ate his dinner, drank his bottle of port, and proposed starting. As it was a bleak, cold day, just in the beginning of the suicidal month of November, a little "bran'y-a-war'er" was prescribed by his friend as a "topper-up" to keep out the cold. One glass led to one more, and that one more to several other one mores. Duets then commenced, and in the pleasures of harmony the pains of his expected patient were forgotten for some hours.

At last Humidus determined to start, he drank off his *last* glass of "bran'y-a-war'er," and mounted his horse. The night was intensely dark, and the snow was beginning to fall in large

and heavy flakes. He, however, was well primed, and ready to go off at all risks. The road from Lambourn, over the Downs towards Wantage, whither he was recommended to proceed, is perhaps of all roads the most dreary and difficult to find, even to those who know it well. Humidus got on pretty straight, considering he rode all on one side, for the first mile out of Lambourn, but when he mounted the hill, and came off the hard road on to the downs, the tracks were all obliterated by the snow. He cantered on, and as he had started with the snow coming dab, dab, in his face, and it still continued to do so, he erroneously fancied he was proceeding in a straight and right direction.

After two or three hours' riding, he was surprised to find himself still upon the open downs, without any signs of a town, or even a solitary habitation near him. He pulled up, and thought on what was best to be done, and finally resolved to leave himself to the guidance of fate, and Gallipot, his nag. He therefore threw the reins on the horse's neck; but as Gallipot turned short round, and seemed to him to be retrogra-

ding to the point from whence they had started, he got in a rage, and seizing the reins, began to belabour him with his whip. Gallipot, though a patient horse, resented this unkind treatment, and commenced a series of kicks and plunges, which at last unseated his master, and threw him over his head.

The horse wisely returned to Lambourn, and on the following morning Humidus was found by a shepherd with his long legs only remaining above the surface of a deep snowdrift. Verdict of a Berkshire jury, "Accidental death, by natural smotheration in the snew."

To return to my tale. During her mother's lifetime the beauty of Agnes Field was unknown, except to her own immediate friends, the Sewtights, and the persons employed about the establishment, for she seldom went into public. When, however, the two sets of lodgings were let to two young men, and Mrs. Caterer, the housekeeper, had the management of Agnes, the fame of her surpassing loveliness began to be spread abroad, and all the young men were anxious to be introduced to Field's

lodgers, in hopes of catching a glance at his daughter.

Agnes, too, much to her annoyance, was compelled by her father to go out every day for the benefit of her health. Mrs. Caterer, who accompanied her, after she had "cleaned herself," had no notion of the beauties of green fields and flowery solitudes. She preferred exhibiting her new bonnet in the street, or in the most frequented walks. She felt herself of some importance, too, as the guardian and companion of the prettiest girl in Oxford; and was rather proud of the notice taken of her by the young men who visited her master's "one and two pairs," in hopes of obtaining an interview with her ward. To say that Agnes was insulted as she walked along, would be using too strong a term; but she was greatly annoyed by the admiring stares of all the university men whom she met, and who never failed paying what they considered a tribute to her beauty, by gazing at her as long as they could see her. Many and many were the bumpers of thick and strong undergraduate port that were swallowed, amidst

loud cheers, to the "health of the lovely Agnes Field!"

It will now be necessary for me to describe the characters of the two gentlemen who occupied Field's lodgings.

The "gentleman in the one pair" was a Mr. Christopher Chinks, though better known among his intimates by the title of Kit Chinks. He was the son of a respectable country gentleman, a fellow-commoner of St. Luke's, and a very great ass. His most conspicuous foible was a tendency to praise his own personalities, which were certainly far from despicable, and to boast of his amatory achievements. What his thoughts and intentions were in the matter of Agnes Field, will best appear by letting the reader hear a conversation which passed in his lodgings a short time after he took possession of them.

"Kit, old fellow," said one of three or four undergraduates who had been wining with him, "you're a lucky dog to get these lodgings."

"Devilish lucky," said all.

"Why! ya—es," replied Kit, who affected

the fine in his speech, "they are enormous convenient, and ex—cessive play—sant."

"Oh! I don't mean that, old fellow; I mean for the chance of having a view now and then of the schneider's pretty daughter," said the first.

"Why, ya—es," observed Kit, looking hesitatingly critical, "she is certainly an inordinate formosity—at least I think I may vaynture to say so."

"Have you been introduced to her yet?" inquired a second.

"No: de—cidedly no. I flayter myself, though, that a vary minute intimation of my wishes would be ayffectual in procuring an einterview," answered Kit, turning quite round to look at himself in a mirror.

"Then you haven't heard her sing yet?" said a third. "They tell me she sings like a canary-bird, and chirps like a linnet."

"I shall rayquire her to seeng the vary first time I see her, and judge of her musicaylities."

"I'll bet you a pound," said the first, "you don't even get to speak to her."

"And I, and I," said Nos. two, three, and four.

"Done," said Kit, "I bayt a pound round, and I'm safe to win; for, if she maynifests any scrupulosity, I shall invade her domaystic privacy. Mother Caterer is a raygular Cayrberus, but I'll find a sop for her."

The other lodger, the "gentleman in the two-pair," was a cadet of a highly respectable family, closely allied to nobility. He was a commoner of St. Matthew's, and was reading hard to qualify himself for the bar, by which profession, through family patronage and zealous industry, he hoped to realize a fortune. His career at college had rendered him a favourite with every one. His rigid attention to lectures and college duties was highly satisfactory to the dons, and his participating, as far as his means and his reading allowed him, in all the manly pursuits of his equals, made him a general favourite with them. Horace Hardyman, indeed, was a model after whose fashion any parent who knew him would gladly have urged his son to form himself. He was manly, high-spirited, exceedingly good-

tempered, and possessed of an unusual quantity of that valuable commodity, self-control.

What he thought of Agnes will best appear from a letter written to his father, soon after his residence at Field's.

"My dear Father,

"I write to thank you for your kind consideration in allowing me to engage a private tutor, without whose assistance I doubt whether I should be able to ensure my class. I have received every attention from my college tutors, but it is impossible for them, consistently with their duties, to devote much time to an individual. I trust that my success in the schools will compensate you for the inconvenience which even this disbursement of so small a sum must cause you, whose means are so limited, and whose claimants on them are so numerous.

"I have kept all my terms in college, and have taken lodgings at the house of Field, a tailor, in the High Street. Strange to say, he has a daughter, who is said to be one of the most highly-accomplished young women in this place.

She owes her acquirements to her mother, now no more, who, though humbly born, was well educated, and engaged for many years as governess in a private family. Agnes, being the only child of her father, and he a widower, is greatly to be pitied. She is placed under the care of the housekeeper, one Mrs. Caterer, who appears to me not to be exactly the sort of person to be entrusted with the superintendence of so lovely a girl as Agnes Field. I can vouch for her beauty, my dear father, as I have both seen and spoken to her—in the presence of her father. I pity her because I think she will be subjected to much annoyance from the men, who, you know, profess an excess of admiration for any thing pretty in the shape of a woman, and have any thing but an agreeable way of displaying their devotion to the fair sex.

"Do not fear that my 'pity is akin to love.' I cannot afford to fall in love with any body but the benchers of Lincoln's Inn and the attorneys, who, I hope, will return my affection — the former by calling me to the bar, and the latter by supplying me with briefs.

"There is a perfumed puppy called Mr. Kit Chinks, lodging in the rooms below mine, who, I understand, has been laying several bets that he will compel Miss Field to sing to him, even if he invades the privacy of her apartments. If he attempts such an unmanly act, I think you will fully approve of the determination I have formed — of kicking him down stairs, or throwing him out of the window.

"Assure my dear mother and sisters of my uninterrupted love, and believe me,

"Your very affectionate son,

"HORACE HARDYMAN."

A few nights after Horace had despatched this letter to his father, Mr. Kit Chinks, who had thrown out several hints of a wish to be introduced to Miss Field—but unsuccessfully—to his great surprise, began to sound Mrs. Caterer on the subject. Now Mrs. Caterer, of the two lodgers, preferred Mr. Kit, because, as she said, "he was *so* handsome, smelt *so* sweet, and dressed *so* remarkable illigant; whereas Mr. Hardyman, though he was well enough for a

man, hadn't a notion of tying a neckcloth, and wore plain, gold studs." She had convinced herself that if Agnes and Kit could only "come together" once, they would fall mutually in love with each other, and make the prettiest couple that ever went to church together. She hinted as much to Miss Field, and received a more snappish reply than she believed so pretty a mouth as her's could utter, and was positively forbidden even to allude to a lodger again.

When, therefore, Mr. Kit applied to her to obtain him an introduction to her young mistress, and backed his application with the present of an enormous red cornelian brooch, Mrs. Caterer pocketed the jewellery with many thanks and courtesies, but respectfully declined the office of go-between.

Kit thus lost his brooch, and was afraid of losing his bets. His friends, moreover, were daily jeering him about the failure of his plans with Miss Field. His vanity was wounded, and he determined, at every risk, to intrude upon Agnes that very night. He had made himself acquainted with the localities of her study, under

the pretence of looking over the house with her father, who, being proud of his child's abilities, had been weak enough to take him into her room, in her absence, to show him her drawings.

Kit was bold and impudent enough with that class of women whose modesty does not stand in the way of their preferment; but when he thought upon the plan he was about to put in execution, for intruding upon and insulting a pure, modest girl, he confessed to himself he felt like a scamp and a coward.

To give himself courage enough for the attempt which his *honour*, as he called it, compelled him to make, he rung his bell, and ordered up a bottle of port wine, with lemons, spice, and other materials for converting it into bishop, which he believed to be the most effectual cordial for stimulating his bravery and strengthening his nerves.

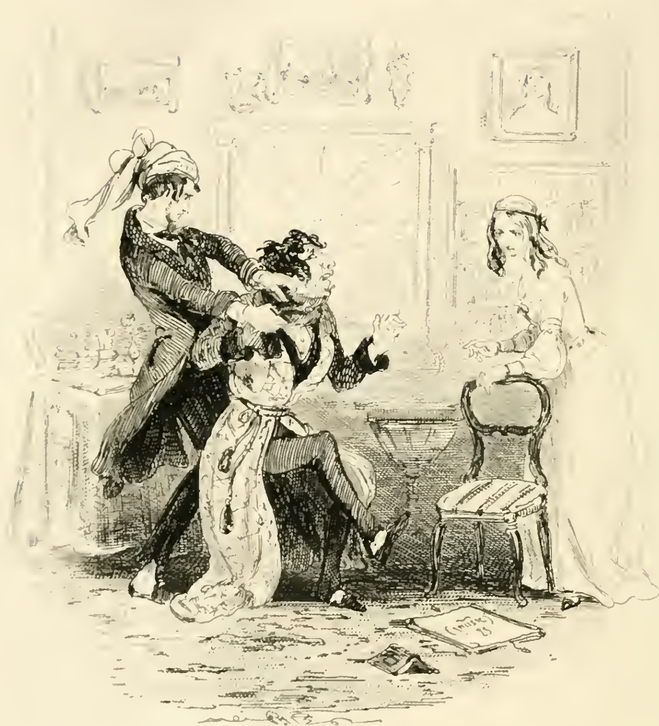
As tumbler after tumbler of the delicious fluid passed his lips, the thermometer of his courage rose several degrees; with the last glass it got up to impudence, and he prepared for action. He exchanged his boots for a pair of thin, creakless,

red morocco slippers, and substituted for his coat a very handsome twilled-silk dressing-gown, in which he flattered himself he was irresistible. He brushed his curly hair and whiskers, and applied a little *huile à la rose*, to give them a brilliant gloss. He then perfumed his silk pocket-handkerchief with *esprit de milles fleurs*, waved it gracefully so as to scatter its fragrance round his person, and show his diamond-ring, and examined himself in the mirror with evident self-satisfaction.

Horace Hardyman was sitting in his rooms deeply engaged over Aristotle's Ethics. He had congratulated himself on being able to commence reading earlier than usual, from the singular fact of there not being a row in Kit Chink's rooms below, who generally had a noisy party every evening. He had taken his three cups of strong green tea, and tied a damp towel round his head to keep his eyes sleepless, and his head cool and collected. As he was analyzing in his mind the contents of the last chapter which he had read, he fancied he heard the creaking of the banisters, and then the stealthy tread of

some one passing his door. He went on reading, however, giving Mrs. Caterer, Field, or some one else, credit for not wishing to disturb him in his studies. In less than five minutes afterwards he was alarmed by a loud scream. He sprung to the door, opened it, and listened. The scream was repeated more loudly, and with half-a-dozen bounds he was up the next flight of stairs, and at Miss Field's study-door. Upon opening it he found Mr. Kit Chinks upon one knee in the middle of the room, making violent gesticulations to Agnes, who had retreated to the bell, which she was ringing, and screaming alternately.

When Horace entered, Agnes ceased to ring and scream, and ran to him, begging him, if he were a gentleman, to protect her from a villain who had dared to come into her room and insult her Mr. Chinks rose from the ground, flourished his handkerchief, and looked magnificent. The contrast in the appearance of the two young men was very great; for Horace, instead of being dressed like a mountebank, and perfumed like a polecat, had no neckerchief on, his body was



The Wooing unpleasantly interrupted

enveloped in an old cotton reading-gown, and his head bound round with a towel *à la Turc.*

Horace, after whispering a few words to Agnes, who was clinging to his arm, led her to the sofa, and begged her not to be alarmed. He then walked up to Chinks, and pointed significantly to the door. Chinks, however, put his gold eye-glass to his nose, and in effeminate tones inquired, "Who the hayll are you?"

"Leave the room, sir, I beg of you immediately," said Horace.

"I shayn't, fayllow!" replied Chinks.

"Don't be frightened, I beg, Miss Field," said Horace, as he seized Chinks by his elegant flowered stock, and twisted it round until he was black in the face, and his eyes protruded fearfully. After giving him a severe shaking, Horace dragged him to the landing, and hurled him down the first flight of stairs, at the bottom of which he rose, and, after rectifying his neckcloth, shook his fist at Horace, and told him "he should heyar from him to-morrow morning."

Mrs. Caterer, who was hurrying up stairs as

fast as her heavy person would permit her, to ascertain the cause of the violent ringing of her mistress's bell, met Chinks as he was descending and wiping his bleeding nose. She was much alarmed, and kindly inquired the cause of his wounded condition; to which Chinks replied, by telling her to "go to the divil for an old she-dog."

Horace remained with Agnes until Caterer made her appearance, and, after he had explained the whole affair to her, wished them a respectful good night, and returned to his rooms. He pursued his studies as calmly as if nothing had happened, except now and then fancying he saw Miss Field's lovely face presenting itself to his eyes, instead of a properispomenon Greek accent.

In the morning, immediately after chapel, a "friend," as the man is properly designated who does his best to induce another man to shoot his "principal," called on Horace to demand satisfaction in Christopher Chinks's name.

"Is he in his rooms now, sir?" inquired Horace.

"He is, sir," replied the "friend."

"Then," said Horace, "if you will accompany me down to him, he shall have satisfaction on the spot."

Mr. Chinks, who was walking up and down his room, hoping that Horace would send an humble apology for the assault he had committed, was rather "taken aback," when he saw him enter with his friend. His politeness, however, did not desert him; he made a stiff bow backwards, and begged him to "take a chay-ir."

Horace declined the proffered seat, and addressed him thus:

"Mr. Chinks, you have sent to me to demand satisfaction for my rough usage of you last night, and you shall have it. You grossly insulted a young lady, because, as I imagine, she was merely a tradesman's daughter, and you felt you could do so with impunity. Now, sir, unless you immediately sit down and write an humble apology to her and her father—the tailor—sir, I shall feel it my duty to lay the matter before your college. As to your ridiculous notion of calling upon me to give you what the world

terms satisfaction, I treat it with the contempt it deserves. Now, sir, may I know your decision?"

"Whart had I bayter do?" said Chinks to his "friend."

"Precisely what Mr. Hardyman suggests," said his friend. "You appear to me to have forgotten the character of a gentleman in your behaviour to Miss Field."

"Oh! vary wayll—if *you* say so I must consaynt," said Kit, and wrote the apology which Horace dictated, and which he sent to Agnes with his compliments by Mrs. Caterer.

By a very singular coincidence Mr. Chinks was taken very ill that very same day, and was strongly recommended by his medical to try change of air. It is also remarkable that when he returned to Oxford to take his degree, he did not even inquire if Field's lodgings were to be let.

At breakfast-time Mr. Field called upon Horace, and thanked him fervently and sincerely for protecting his daughter, and begged that he would gratify him by walking into his breakfast-

room to receive her thanks in person. To this it was not probable he would demur, and after paying a little more attention to his toilet than was his wont, Horace presented himself before the grateful girl, who, with tears in her eyes, repeated the thanks which her father had already proffered.

I could, if I were so inclined, spin out several chapters in recounting how the services rendered to Agnes, and her gratitude towards him, induced her to admit Horace constantly into her study in the presence of Mrs. Caterer. How his fine, manly, open-hearted disposition, won upon her heart, and what ravages her beauty, sweetness of temper, and accomplishments, made in his breast. I might relate how they grew gradually so intimate that Horace was the constant companion of her walks, even after Mrs. Caterer, through illness, was incapable of accompanying them. How Horace found that, instead of going down to Tenby during "the long" to read with his tutor as he had intended, he could pursue his studies much better if he staid up in Oxford. How little excursions were planned and made to

Blenheim, Nuneham, and other pleasant spots. How Agnes grew very anxious about the health of her grandfather, the poor crippled Ephraim, and walked with Horace almost daily to Merton to visit him. All this I could recount, together with the interesting conversations that made the way seem shorter than it really was, and added wings to the fleeting feet of time; but I must merely state the results of all these circumstances. Without any intention of injuring her whom he dearly loved, Horace opened the state of his feelings to her, and received her promise to be his wife, as soon as he had obtained his family's sanction. Agnes in an unguarded moment fell a willing victim to her entire trust in the honour and fidelity of the only man, except her father, with whom she had an opportunity of becoming intimate.

Ephraim was too much engaged in his business to observe what was going on. Mrs. Caterer was still ill. The only person who watched their growing intimacy was young Geoffrey, who acquainted his father with his suspicions that all was not right. Geoffrey, the elder, told his wife,

and Mrs. Sewtight thought it her duty to expostulate with Agnes. From her mother, had she lived, Agnes would not have disguised a word or a thought, but deeming the well-meaning Mrs. Sewtight's interference impertinent, she treated her remarks and expostulations with contempt.

After the long vacation, which seemed very short to the lovers, was over, the examinations commenced: Horace went up for his degree, and obtained his first class. Agnes, who was fully aware of the importance of his succeeding in the schools, and had resolutely insisted on his persevering in his studies to the neglect of herself, was rewarded for her self-denial by witnessing his joy at his success. She had never doubted for an instant that any obstacle to their union would be offered by his family, and now that his studies were over, she revealed to him the necessity that existed for the speedy fulfilment of his promise to make her his own.

Horace would have married her at once, but Agnes would not consent until his parents' sanction was obtained. To all his urgent solicita-

tions to unite herself to him by a private marriage, her only answer was, "write home and gain your father's consent, and I will be your's immediately."

Horace did write home, but not to his father; for though they had lived as brothers, rather than as a father and child, he felt unwilling to apply to him directly. Then for the first time he felt the full force of his guilty and imprudent conduct. Never before had he had a secret which he dared not reveal to his father. He wrote to his eldest brother, and after explaining to him the incident that had introduced Agnes to his notice—their subsequent intimacy, and its results — his intense love for her, and his determination to keep and perform the promise he had made to her, begged of him to break the matter to his father, and obtain his permission to present Agnes to his family as his bride.

By return of post came a letter, which Agnes, seeing it bore the postmark of his native place, joyfully conveyed to Horace herself. He opened it, and read as follows:—

"My dear Horace,

"You have got into a sad scrape, and must get out of it in the best way you can. I confess I see but one alternative—either give up the girl, and settle an annuity upon her, to which I will gladly contribute from my small means; or else marry her, and give up all connexion with your mother and sisters for ever. Your father might possibly be brought to consent to receive you again; but you know that our mother's pride of high ancestry would never permit her to accept as a daughter-in-law the child of a tradesman. If you are determined that the matter shall be revealed to your father, you must communicate it to him yourself.

"Your affectionate brother,

"CHARLES."

Horace gave this unfeeling letter to Agnes. She read it, and for the first time perceived the true nature of her position. She fell back upon the sofa, and shed the bitter tears of guilt, remorse, and despair.

Horace, when the paroxysm of her grief had subsided, did all he could to cheer her, but she refused to be comforted. He pressed her again and again to marry him, but she firmly declined to subject him to the displeasure of his friends.

"Oh! would that my poor mother had lived, then had we been spared all this pain and guilt," said Agnes, as she threw herself into Horace's arms, and sobbed upon his breast.

Removing her gently from his arms to the sofa, he sat down, and under the influence of his excited feelings wrote to his father, and told him every thing—except the most important—that Agnes in a few months would most probably be a mother. This fact he concealed from false delicacy towards his beloved. He read the letter to Agnes, and she, fondly believing that no father's breast could be obdurate enough to resist so strong an appeal to his feelings, became calm, and admitted hope once more into her bosom.

Instead of sending an answer to this letter, Mr. Hardyman came up to Oxford. He laid his son's letter before the astonished Ephraim,

who had no suspicion that his daughter was the object of his lodger's affections. He explained to him calmly the impossibility of his son's marrying at all at present, and the family disagreements which would be sure to result from his contracting so unequal a marriage, at a future period. To the wretched Agnes he repeated this explanation, and readily obtained from her a written promise, that she never would consent to marry his son clandestinely.

Having thus favourably, as he thought, brought the unpleasant affair to a satisfactory conclusion, he went up to his son's rooms, who was not aware of his arrival. He told him that he had arranged every thing amicably, and showing him Agnes's written promise, insisted upon his leaving Oxford with him immediately. Horace entreated to be permitted to say farewell to Agnes. His father consented, and a message was sent to beg her attendance; but an answer was returned, that Miss Field was too ill to see any one. The carriage was ordered to the door, and in one hour from his father's arrival, Horace was leaving Oxford for ever.

Upon one of these occasions, after dining at his club — the University — and, being rather bored by a pedantic country parson, he sought the solitude of his chambers, lighted his cigar, and searched his library for a volume over which he might luxuriate, until the clock, which regulates the movements of the members of Lincoln's Inn, should warn him of the arrival of midnight. He took down a volume of Shakspeare, and, in turning over the pages to select a passage to commence with, something fell upon the floor from between the leaves. He stooped to pick it up, and, after examining it carelessly for a few minutes, and wondering what it could be, and how it came there, a thorn upon a small withered branch of the wild rose-tree pierced his finger. The book and cigar were laid down, and for nearly three hours Horace sat back in his chair, thinking upon Agnes Field — for she had given him that very rose-branch in one of their walks down Merton Lane, and begged him to preserve it for her sake. The contraction of his brow, and the frequent agonized clenching of his hands, showed that his thoughts were any

thing but agreeable. After an apparent struggle with himself, carefully replacing the withered branch, he rose and spoke aloud, as if to confirm himself in some resolution he had formed, and said, "I will do it — I am in independent circumstances, and have no one to control me; it is but an act of justice—it shall be done."

On the following day an advertisement to this effect appeared in the public newspapers.

"If Ephraim Field, formerly of the city of Oxford, tailor, and his daughter Agnes, will apply either personally or by letter, at No. 19, Stone Buildings, Lincoln's Inn, they will hear of something to their advantage."

As no application was made in answer to this advertisement, Horace wrote to Geoffrey Sewtight, begging him, if he knew any thing of Miss Field and her father, to acquaint him with their present residence. To this he received an answer from Mrs. Sewtight, stating that her husband had been dead three years, and had carried the secret of Field's place of residence with him to the grave. He next wrote to Merton, to old Ephraim Field—forgetting the number of years

that had elapsed since he had seen him a very old man. His letter was returned by the post-master, enclosed in an envelope, wherein were a few words to say that Ephraim had been long since dead, and that none of the family lived at Merton, or in the neighbourhood.

Horace gave up the search in despair, and devoted himself more earnestly than ever to the law, and to that "gentlemanly vice," the accumulation of money.

The summer assizes approached, and a brief, with a retainer, had been sent up to him a few days before the time arrived for his starting on his journey. The cause was one which excited a great sensation in Devonshire, where a murder had been committed under very mysterious circumstances.

The facts as stated in his brief were these. A widow-woman, who kept a small public-house in a village a few miles from Exeter, was found one day early in the morning by her own daughter, a child of ten years of age, lying upon the ground in the taproom, with her head nearly severed from her body. Her pocket had been

cut from her side, and the cupboard in which she usually kept her little earnings had been forced open and robbed. The little girl went to bed the night before about nine o'clock, leaving her mother up with two labouring men. She fell asleep as soon as she was in bed, and did not wake until five o'clock the next morning; when, finding that her mother, who always slept with her, had not been to bed, she got up and went down in search of her.

There were no signs of a forcible entrance having been made, nor was there any instrument found with which the deed could have been committed. The body was found lying on its face near the fender, as if it had fallen from the chair that was still standing directly opposite the fire, and in which Mrs. Crawford—the murdered woman — was in the habit of sitting to curl her hair after her customers had left the house.

Suspicion naturally fell on a young man, a gentleman, the son of a widowed lady who lived in the "great house," as a small and old manor-house was called, just outside the village. He

was an only child of his mother, and quite spoilt. His wild and refractory conduct had often led him into serious scrapes. He was a frequenter of races, cock and man fights, baited bulls and badgers, sung an admirable song, and even went upon the stage, and was successful in such characters as *Crack* in the "Turnpike Gate." His mother, who was always an invalid, was seriously alarmed and worried by his disreputable proceedings, though she fortunately knew not the extent to which his dissipations were carried.

George Templeton, for such was the name of the youth, had slept at Mrs. Crawford's on the night of the murder, after returning home late from a fair in the neighbourhood. This he was frequently in the habit of doing, rather than disturb his mother, and expose himself to her remonstrances against his keeping late hours. He had been rather intoxicated over night; and, as he said, found the front door of the house open, and went up stairs without seeing any body, and lay down on the bed without taking off his clothes.

In this state he was found by the neighbours, who were summoned by the little girl, as soon as she had discovered the body of her mother. A neighbouring magistrate, who knew the lad, and the bad character he bore, ordered him into custody, and told the constables to search him. Nothing was found upon him to raise a suspicion against him, besides an old eastern coin, which Mary Crawford declared had belonged to her mother. This George Templeton allowed, but said that Mrs. Crawford had sold it to him a few days before.

The ground about the house was examined, and as it had rained — as it *always* does in Devonshire — the night previous to the murder, among the prints of nailed shoes were found many marks leading to and from the door of Mrs. Crawford's cottage, corresponding exactly with the boots which George Templeton wore.

He accounted for it by saying that he had tied his pony to the gate, and after ascertaining that he could gain admittance to his bedroom, had returned and turned the pony into the little shed, which stood near the gate where it was

found, saddled and bridled, and tied up to the rack.

A search was of course made for the pocket of Mrs. Crawford, and for an instrument wherewith the deed could have been effected. For a long time this search proved vain, but at last the apron, with a stone and a large clasp-knife inside it, was found in a neighbouring pool of thick, dirty slush, which ran from the dung-mixen. In the same pool were discovered a pair of dogskin riding-gloves, covered with blood and filled with pebbles, for the purpose of sinking them. These gloves George confessed belonged to him, but declared that to the best of his belief he had lost them at the neighbouring fair, but that he was too much intoxicated to recollect what he did with them. Under these very suspicious circumstances he was committed to Exeter gaol, on the coroner's warrant, to take his trial for the murder at the ensuing assizes.

The two labouring men clearly proved, by several witnesses, that they had left the public together, and gone straight to their own

homes before ten o'clock; after which hour Mrs. Crawford had been seen at her door, and spoken to by several persons.

The newspapers, of course, were full of this dreadful transaction for some weeks previous to the trial, and very charitably, as is their wont, took upon themselves the offices of judge and jury, pronounced George guilty, and sentenced him to death. Every little lark he had been engaged in was magnified into some grave offence, which showed a predilection for the shedding of human blood. He was accused of having killed his father by his bad conduct and violent temper, and of having driven his mother mad. But all that is *comme à l'ordinaire*, and sells a paper.

On entering the court on the morning of the trial, Horace, of course, found it excessively crowded, especially by ladies, who, strange to say, like to have their sensibilities tickled by scenes, from which one would think their tender natures would suggest to them the propriety of absenting themselves. When the prisoner appeared at the bar, which he did in a plain suit

of black clothes, looking like a handsome man and a gentleman, as he might have been, the application of various scent-bottles to the noses, and worked handkerchiefs to the eyes of the fair auditors, proclaimed plainly that they all thought it was a great pity that so fine a young man should have condescended to become a murderer.

"How say you, George Templeton," inquired the clerk of the arraigns, "are you guilty or not guilty of this murder wherewith you stand charged?"

"Not guilty," replied the prisoner, in tones so firm but melodious, that Horace involuntarily turned to gaze upon him.

After his junior had opened the case for the prosecution, Horace, in a calm, quiet, but clear manner, stated the facts to the jury, examined his witnesses, and sat down.

The counsel who defended the prisoner had but little to do except to call witnesses to character. Several respectable persons appeared in his behalf, and gave him a good character for liberality, generosity, and kindness of heart;

but all of them allowed him to be wild, thoughtless, extravagant, and a constant frequenter of bullbaits and fights, which the learned judge who presided at the trial thought amounted al most to as great a crime as the one with which he stood charged.

The prisoner declined saying any thing in his defence, but merely said, in a calm, unfaltering voice, "I am perfectly innocent, my lord, of the crime imputed to me; but circumstances are against me, and I must rely on time to clear my character."

The judge summed up, and the jury, without leaving the box, returned a verdict of "Guilty."

No sooner had the verdict been given, than a shriek most piercing filled the court, and struck horror into every breast. The prisoner, who had heard his doom without a change of feature, or variation of colour, sprang to the front of the bar, and leapt over into the body of the court, crying, "My mother! my mother! I have killed my mother!" The whole assembly rose in confusion. In vain the judge and the officers of the court endeavoured to restore order. Every

one was anxious to gain a sight of the culprit's parent, and was determined to gratify his or her anxiety. The gaolers however came round, and seizing George Templeton, forcibly dragged him back to the dock. Horace—who, with others, had rushed towards the lady when her son was dragged from her, anxious to render her all the assistance in their power—helped to carry her out of court. Her bonnet and veil were removed, and the cool air seemed partially to revive her. "Water!" cried Horace; and when he had applied it to her lips, the glass fell from his hand, for as soon as consciousness returned to the lady she whispered in his ear, as he hung over her, "HORACE HARDYMAN, YOU HAVE HANGED OUR SON."

The execution took place on the following Monday, and George died protesting his innocence of the murder, though he owned he deserved his fate, for his wicked and thoughtless conduct towards the best of mothers.

"I never felt the controlling hand of a father," he said to the clergyman who attended him, "and to the kind but mistaken indulgence

of my widowed mother I owe it that I am what I am, a convicted felon."

Horace Hardyman, who in the horrid whisper recognized the tones of Agnes Field, and knew her by her eyes, the moment they were turned upon him, was carried senseless to his lodgings. After several weeks of severe illness he recovered, to find his wife, as he would gladly have made her, a lunatic, and his child hanged on the gibbet.

He requested that the servant who had attended on Mrs. Templeton might be summoned to him as soon as he was sufficiently recovered. In her he discovered an aunt of Agnes—the youngest child of old Ephraim Field, and the sister of Ephraim the younger. From her he learnt that Agnes and her father, to whom she revealed her pregnancy, had agreed to leave Oxford, dreading the pointed finger of scorn. They only made known their plans to Geoffrey Sewtight and herself, whom they bound by a strong oath not to betray their place of residence under any circumstances.

They assumed the name of Tomkins, and

Agnes that of Templeton, under which she passed herself off as the widow of an officer who had died abroad. Ephraim died soon after the birth of the infant; and Agnes, after moving from place to place, finally settled in the old manor-house, in the village where the murder was committed.

Horace, after the death of Agnes, which took place about a year after her son's execution, returned from France, whither he had retired, after giving up his business and disposing of his chambers, hired the old manor-house himself, and there led a life of solitude. Excepting to old Martha Field, he spoke to no one. To her he was kind, but never communicative. He gave largely to the poor through her agency, but declined all intercourse with mankind.

The only ray, and a bright one it was, that beamed on his latter years, was the confession upon his deathbed of one of the two labourers who had been drinking at Mrs. Crawford's on the night before the murder was discovered, that he was the guilty party. He had stolen silently from his cottage, after he had entered it

with his companion, and seeing George go into the house, followed him. He saw him reel through the outer room and drop his gloves at the stair-foot. The thought struck him that he would murder Mrs. Crawford for the sake of the money that he had seen her deposit in the cupboard, as the blame would doubtless be laid upon George Templeton. How this plan succeeded has been seen. He cut her throat as he stood behind her, with the knife that was found in her pocket, which was lying on the table by her side, having put on George's gloves to keep the blood-stains from his hands. He then sunk all of them in the pond, and returned to his cottage, unseen by any one.

A small marble tablet affixed to the lowly walls of —— Church, near Exeter, may still be seen, on which are engraved the words—

"INFELIX AGNES."

CHAPTER XX.

"Ah, *mong share* P.," said Mrs. P., closing my last number, "I like that much, it makes one feel so miserably interested and excited. I'm sure the public will like it much better than all the larks and nonsense of the young men. Why don't you try something else, *key song fore ler romong*—something sentimental—like Abelard and Eloise?"

"What college was they hof?" inquired Dusterly; "hi never was hacquainted with hany gentleman with sich very queer names, and hi've knowed Hoxford for some years."

"Those unfortunate persons," said Mrs. P., "were a French gentleman and lady, as was very unfortunate in their flirtations, *doo among miserables*."

"Hi don't think the miserables disactly suits my friend Peter," said Dusterly; "he's hof too

sanguinary ha temperature, and does better hin the funnies."

"Yes," said Broome, "I'm all for a little fun. 'Begone dull care,' was always my favourite song. The last story was all very well, just by way of a change, like a glass of cider, instead of strong beer, on a hot summer's day, or a day's fishing in 'the long,' after working hard all term-time."

"Yes," said I, "you're right, my friends; I ought to have adhered rigidly to the *qualis ab incepto*, and been satisfied with amusing my friends, without attempting the pathetics. I must not return to that 'strain again,' but try and excite their risibilities as was my wont."

"Oh!" said Mrs. P., "there's no doubt you can make people laugh—any other fool can do that—*may voo ler cootay tro gra*."

I was about to prove my metal, by returning iron-ical thanks to Mrs P. for the compliment she had been pleased to pay me, when my boy, Nicomedes, interrupted me, with a very dirty face, and a message from the Bursar, that he wished to see me immediately. I put on my

coat—for we had been enjoying a pipe in the arbour in our shirt-sleeves—and hurried down to college.

"Peter," said the Bursar, "I have just been reading your little story about Agnes Field, and although I do not mean to say you have not done justice to your tale, I think such fables are better avoided. You profess to write especially for the entertainment of your University friends and patrons, and you ought not to try and rouse the sensibilities of those who, by their college vows, are debarred the pleasure of exciting the sympathies of the fair sex. It's cruel, Peter, and I hate cruelty to man, woman, or beast."

"It was written, sir," said I, apologetically, "expressly for the ladies, and I have always found that they like to have their sensibilities excited by sentimentals."

"Well, never mind, Peter," continued the Bursar, "*I* think it cruel, and cruelty I dislike. Open that basket, Peter, and you will find a very fine eel in it. The buttery-boy caught it last night with a night-line — he'll be punished for poaching some day or other — and as it's a

fine, lively eel, I should like to have it spitch-cocked. Eels, however, have not agreed with me lately, and in M. Ude's treatise on cookery I have discovered the reason. He says there is an empyreumatic oil just under the pellicle, which is offensive to the stomach, and recommends their being tied to a spit, and roasted before they are killed. Now, Peter, I can trust you to take that very fine eel and roast him while animation remains in him, until, by running a knife gently along his back, the skin will open sufficiently to allow the noxious oil to escape. To prevent the poor thing's suffering too much, you can kill him before he is *fried*. I can't trust Coquus, he has a heavy hand, and instead of merely tickling an oyster to induce him to open his shell, he murders him outright, and one loses the delicious sensation of feeling his dying struggles—which are merely muscular, you know—as he is gliding gently down one's throat. Take the eel, Peter, cook him thoroughly, and treat him tenderly."

"Without rousing his sensibilities, you mean, sir, I presume?"

" Certainly, Peter, it's cruel, and *I* hate cruelty in any shape."

In spite of these remarks of the Bursar, whose authority I never dispute, about the cruelty of rousing sensibilities and exciting sympathies, by narrating sentimental stories, I must relate a melancholy occurrence which happened to one of our gentlemen, even if I have sentence of cruelty passed upon me for recording it. I shall call it

THE DUEL IN PORT MEADOW.

Mr. and Mrs. " liberal and discerning public," allow me to introduce you to Mr. Straddle and Mr. Blowhard, both gentlemen, and gentlemen-commoners of St. Peter's College, Oxford. They are, you will observe, sitting in their dressing-gowns, for it is a warm summer's evening, eating Wytham strawberries and drinking their claret; drinking, mind, not sipping it, for both are fond of Lafitte, and neither of them is addicted to the " total abstinence" system.

" Come, Straddle," said Blowhard, " help

yourself and pass the bottle. You seem melancholy, man, what ails you?"

"You can't wonder at it, my dear fellow," said Straddle, sighing and filling his glass, "when you consider under what deplorable circumstances I am growing old."

"Ha! ha! growing old indeed! that's rather too good; to talk of growing old at six and twenty."

"Eight and twenty, eight and twenty, on my honour, Blowhard. I entered the army at sixteen, and, after serving six years as an ensign in a marching regiment, my well-meaning friends suddenly advised me to 'exchange' all my hopes of a gory bed upon some 'well-foughten field' for the family incumbency of Plumstead, likely to be vacated by that sound but apoplectic divine, my maternal uncle, Philoneicus Polemic."

"And a very good exchange, too," said Blowhard. "No chance of getting on in the army in these piping times of peace, without purchase, unless, indeed, you can boast of a commander-in-chief for your godfather."

" Very true," continued Straddle, " but here have I been four years resident in Oxford, and what have I got by it?"

" Got? Why you have got — into debt, haven't you?"

" True again. That's easily got, any where, but beyond that I cannot even get my *testamur* for my little-go, though I've been up three times for it."

" Why, you've only been plucked once."

" No, but I bolted twice, and that's very nearly as disreputable, and quite as unsatisfactory. How they could expect that I, who never relished grammar at fourteen, could take to it at four and twenty, I cannot conceive. I hate college."

" Well, never mind, old fellow," said Blowhard, " you can't hate it worse than I do. I always wished to go to sea, but my father, the admiral, said I had not brains enough for a powder-monkey, and was only fit for a parson. So here I am, with the pleasing prospect before me of getting a chaplaincy on board a man-of-war, and being sent down into the cockpit to

help the surgeon, instead of fighting on the quarter-deck."

"It's a regular bore, certainly," said Straddle, "but come, I'll give you a toast—here's confusion to all misjudging paternities."

Just as Mr. Straddle was raising his bumper to his lips, a single rap at his room-door induced him to set it down again and dash into his bedroom.

"Come in," said Blowhard.

"Is Mr. Straddle at home, sir?" said Finedraw, the tailor, just poking his nose into the room.

"No, he is not," said Blowhard, "what do you want?"

"Just brought home three new coats, four pair summer trousers, and — and — and — his little account, sir."

"You'd better leave them, Finedraw, and call again, he's not in now."

"Beg pardon, Mr. Blowhard, but I rather *think* he must be in," said Finedraw, pointing to the full glass opposite the empty chair, "and I've a very large bill—"

"Think, sir! do you mean to say you think I'm telling you a lie, sir! leave the clothes and the room!"

Mr. Finedraw made a low bow and did as he was desired—for he was used to it.

"There," said Straddle, "that comes of being waited on by a young scout—the old ones 'sport oak' by instinct. If Peter can't wait on me himself, I must hire a private tiger. I hate being dunned."

"Why don't you pay every term, then," said Blowhard, "it's much the best plan."

"Decidedly," said Straddle, "when you've got the tin to do it with, which I haven't."

"Why run in debt then?"

"How can I avoid it when the fellows are so polite and pressing for my custom? If I order a coat, the fellow persuades me that I want two at least; and it was only the other day that I ordered six wash leather waistcoats of old Quarterman, and he sent me in three dozen."

"Why didn't you return them then?"

"Oh! that's too much trouble. Besides, they'll all come in some day or other. I've

boots enough to last me my life. Heigho! it's a nuisance being dunned perpetually. I've serious thoughts of paying off my ticks soon, though."

"Any chance of a legacy then? or is the governor rickety?" inquired Blowhard.

"No, no, my dear fellow, no such luck. I mean to sacrifice myself to the interests of my duns by marrying a middle-aged woman with an immensity of pewter," answered Straddle, opening another bottle of Lafitte.

"Capital claret," said Blowhard, inhaling the bouquet, "what do you give a dozen?"

"I really haven't the most distant idea. Scott sends it in, and I drink it. I suppose I shall know some day or other. It is *very* good, and when I'm married I'll take all he has left, and pay ready money for it."

"Who is the lady? Name her, and we'll drink her health, wishing her luck with her bargain."

"That," said Straddle, "I can't do, as I'm still upon the look out. There must be many women though about, who would not sneeze at

such a figure as mine, though I'm rather inclined to be stout."

Mr. Straddle displayed an excess of modesty in thus describing his personal appearance. He was fat—very fat—though tall withal, and it was whispered among his companions in arms that he left the army because he used to perspire violently on parade.

"Well," said Blowhard, "as you're a good sort of fellow, and would make a liberal use of your money if you had it, I think I can give you a wrinkle."

"What, in some old woman's face?"

"Not so very old. Under five and forty I should guess, and not so bad-looking, when you see her behind."

"Never mind her looks so as she has lots of tin," said Straddle. "Who is she? Not a widow, I hope, as they are up to too many dodges for me. Catch a weazle asleep, eh?"

"You know the freshman that came up the other day?" inquired Blowhard.

"Why we have had three raw recruits this term," said Straddle.

"I mean the man who, as you army men would say, 'joined,' or, as my nautical dad would express it, 'came on board' last. The little, thin, slim, and trim gentleman-commoner who combs his hair down each side of his face, and wears his shirt-collar turned down to look poetical."

"Well, you don't want me to do the matrimonial with him, I suppose," said Straddle, laughing.

"No, certainly not," continued Blowhard, "but he has brought up a tame aunt with him, who is deputed by his mother, who is in India, to look after him during his campaign in college—to see that he combs his hair, cleans his teeth, and don't drink more than two glasses of wine, I suppose. This female secretary of the home department, who is called Miss Violetta Jilks, has, I am informed, £3000 a year in her own right, which will all go, if she die unmarried, to this nice-looking nephew, Mr. Byron Scott Montgomery Jilks."

"How do you know all this?" inquired Straddle, beginning to look much interested.

"Oh! Peter's my informant," said Blowhard, "he knows every thing, and has doubtless administered a quantum suff of strong ale to her groom — a staid, stiff, old buffer in skyblue livery—and pumped him of all particulars."

"Do you know Jilks, old fellow?" asked Straddle.

"No, but I'll call on him to-morrow morning."

"Do so. And now for one more bottle to drink a short life and a merry husband to Miss Violetta Jilks."

The fresh bottle was floored, or, as Straddle expressed it, another "Frenchman was killed;" and after a harmless supper of lobster-salad, and dressed crab, half a dozen cigars, with corresponding "colds without," the parties parted for the night. Straddle went to bed, and was tormented with the nightmare in the form of Miss Violetta Jilks; and Blowhard haunted by the effeminate looks of her poetically-dressed nephew, Byron Scott Montgomery Jilks.

On the following morning, after lectures, Blowhard watched Mr. Jilks to his rooms,

and proceeded to make a formal call. He found him reclining gracefully on his sofa, dressed in an elegant silk reading-gown, with a guitar suspended to his neck by a broad scarlet ribbon. As if ashamed of being caught in the fact of playing Troubadour, Jilks struck a hasty chord, and divested himself of the instrument, which he deposited carefully on a new "horizontal grand" pianoforte.

Blowhard introduced himself, talked a little Oxford chit-chat, which seemed as mysterious as the "unknown tongue" to Jilks, who merely did his part of the dialogue by looking choky, and nodding like a mandarin. He concluded his visit by inviting him to wine with him after dinner.

Jilks seemed equally afraid of saying yes or no, and murmured something about never drinking wine, and of *teaing* with his aunt. Blowhard insisted on his accepting the invitation, and told him he might drink as little as he pleased, and imbibe twankay with his relative afterwards.

As soon as Blowhard had left his rooms, Jilks was very much frightened at having given his

consent to go to a wine-party without consulting his aunt. He wished to go, however, as he found it rather stupid playing duets every evening at the tea-table and pianoforte. He therefore sat down and told her, in a perfumed note, that his tutor required his attendance at lecture all that evening.

This, for so young a man, showed great inventive powers, and gave great hopes of his one day or other being able to divest himself of what he called " the despotic chains of female tyrannical thraldom."

He went to Mr. Blowhard's, and was introduced to Mr. Straddle in due form. Mr. Blowhard apologized for not asking a party to meet him, alleging in excuse, that he fancied he might prefer a quiet to a noisy evening. Jilks assented, and was really glad that he had not to face a large party of strangers.

He drank a few glasses of claret, and as it was *only* claret, and exceedingly good claret, and he was not pressed to fill his glass every time, he went on imbibing until his tongue began to run. Being properly "drawn" by his

new acquaintances, he became very communicative, and let them know his decided talents for music and poetry; and what was more to their purpose, the exact amount of his present income or allowance, and his brilliant expectations from his aunt Violetta.

Both Blowhard and Straddle were suddenly smitten with a strong attachment for the "sister arts," and professed an extraordinary propensity for the society of ladies who were accomplished therein. Jilks was delighted at their manifest similarity of tastes with his own, and volunteered to introduce them to his aunt as early as it might be convenient for that lady to receive them.

Having thus accomplished what they aimed at, they dismissed him that he might go to his aunt's to tea, and while sufficiently warmed with wine, without being in the least intoxicated, might expatiate to her upon their social and moral virtues with greater energy than he would have done when uninspired by their wine and flattery.

Violetta thought that the lecture her nephew

had been receiving from the college tutor must have been on some very exciting theme, as she had never seen him in such spirits before. He told her, upon her hinting as much, that the lecture was over sooner than he expected, and that he had taken two glasses of very light claret with two of his fellow-pupils before he left college. Miss Violetta was rather alarmed at this, but when Byron Scott Montgomery — for she always addressed and alluded to him by all the names which his godfathers, and she, his godmother, had given him — launched out into an elaborate eulogium upon the gentlemanly looks, dress, and manners of his new acquaintances, and their ardent love of poetry, music, and painting, Miss Violetta's fears were obliterated by feelings of joy, that her nephew had been fortunate enough to fall into the society of such nice young gentlemen.

"My dearest Byron Scott Montgomery!" exclaimed Miss Jilks, clasping her fair hands — which were rather skinny—and turning her eyes up to the ceiling, "what unrivalled felicity you must have experienced in meeting with two such

kindred souls! hearts capable of sharing with you the purest and most meditative poetic influences! We must ask the lads to unite with us in a social inhalement of the pure decoction of the seric herb — would they prefer muffins or crumpets, think you?"

"Lads, aunt!" said Jilks, "they're men grown—regular six-footers, and one has been in the army, and the other looks a great deal better suited for 'seeking the bubble reputation at the cannon's mouth,' than for masticating your muffins and crumpets."

"Then we must have some coffee and *chasse*," said Aunty.

"Sandwiches and bottled porter," suggested Jilks

"Byron Scott Montgomery!" said Miss Violetta, looking cathedrally solemn; "never allude in the most distant manner to the introduction of such vulgarities into my temporary residence! What poetry can there be in porter?"

"As to poetry, I don't know — there's a good deal of puff necessary to make both relish," said Jilks; "and I'm sure neither Straddle nor Blow-

hard would look so oleaginous as they do, if they had limited themselves to twankay and burnt beans."

"Byron Scott Montgomery! that's slang! never allow your volubility of articulation to induce you to resort to metaphors, suited only to the *embouchure* of the *canaille.* What are the nomenclatures of your *nouveaux amis?*" inquired Miss Jilks; for, to say the truth, her knowledge of French was nearly on a par with Mrs. P.'s.

"Straddle and Blowhard," answered Jilks.

"Give me the *portfeuille,* Byron Scott Montgomery," said Miss Jilks; and when she had received it, she selected a bit of pink paper and wrote two very diminutive notes with a crow-quill, and invited Blowhard and Straddle to tea on the following evening at nine o'clock. In the lower corner of each was written "music and conversation," as a hint to them not to expect cards or supper.

Miss Jilks then compelled her nephew to *do* two or three little duets, and sent him into college with her groom to put him to bed.

Before I proceed further with my *historiette*, as she herself would have called it, it will be necessary to give the reader some little insight into the birth, parentage, and education of Miss Jilks.

Miss Violetta Jilks and her elder sister were the daughters and only children of Mr. Exsuperius Jilks, a respectable banker and man's mercer in a small country town. Their mother died while they were yet infants, and their father, to get them out of the way, that they might not interfere with the computation of compound and simple interest, sent them at an early age to, and left them entirely to the care and management of, a lady who kept a "respectable seminary for young ladies." There they learnt a smattering of a few things, which would be most likely useless to them in after life, and were taught to despise the acquirement of the humbler arts of making their own clothes, and darning their own stockings, as "unbecoming of young ladies of great expectations."

The elder, Miss Jilks, who delighted in the name of Euphrasia, was, at the sweet age of six-

teen, found wanting one fine summer's morning, and, when discovered, introduced herself to her indignant father as Mrs. Jilks, having gained that matronly title by a marriage with her first cousin, who was junior clerk in the banking concern.

The elder Jilks refused to receive them under his paternal roof for some time, but pardoned them at the instigation of the member for the borough, who, to repay many little favours he had received from the hands of the principal inhabitant and most influential voter in the place, obtained for the young man a civil appointment in the service of the H. E. I. C. Ere they sailed "for Madras and Calcutta, touching at Ceylon," Mrs. Jilks gave birth to our hero, and wisely preferred leaving him behind her to be educated under her sister's eye, to exposing him to sea-sickness and other miseries attendant on a voyage to the East.

Shortly after Jilks and his wife sailed, old Jilks met with an accident, which, after some weeks of great suffering, caused his death. He sat, on market-days, at the receipt of custom on

a very high stool, to make his customers fancy he was standing to receive them and their deposits.

One day he had occasion to rise from this stool to make a low bow to a lady, who always left a large sum in his hands without requiring interest for it, and, before he could sit down again, one of the clerks, as he said, on purpose, moved the stool away, and Mr. Jilks fell heavily upon the ground and injured his spine. He made a will, leaving all his property to his younger daughter and to his grandson, Byron Scott Montgomery, after her, in case she should die unmarried, or without issue. This he did, not from any resentment he felt towards his elder child, but because he believed her husband was "well-placed," and fully qualified for realizing a large fortune in India. His business and the premises he left to his old and faithful head-clerk and foreman. Thus died Mr. Jilks, senior.

Miss Violetta took a small house in her native borough, and retained her deceased father's man-of-all-work, Timothy Thornback, in her service.

week pocket-money when he came up to Oxford, and he did not know how to spend it.

Return we, or which is more grammatical, let us return to Messrs. Straddle and Blowhard.

As these gentlemen were sitting at breakfast on the morning following the bamboozlement of Jilks, a double rap at the closed oak induced the former to peep through the keyhole, and, upon seeing a sky-blue livery, he opened the door without any trepidation, and begged Timothy Thornback to come in.

"Be these one Muster Stroddle's 'partiments, plase 'e, sir?" said Tim, taking off his hat, and searching for something underneath the lining-leather of it.

"My name is Straddle," said the owner of it, laying a great stress on the *a*.

"Then I be got note for thee—here un be, mon, and here's 'nother for t'other chap, Muster Blowhard; know where a can find he, wonder?"

"Oh!" said Straddle, "you are Miss Jilks's man. Pray, walk in—Mr. Blowhard is here, in my rooms."

Tim obeyed, and, thrusting both the billets into Straddle's hand, stepped into the room, and took his station on the mat near the door, wondering and feeling rather frightened at the cautious manner with which Straddle closed the oak behind him.

When the gentlemen had read their notes and winked at one another, without being seen by Tim, who was amusing himself by examining the heterogeneous contents of a college room, Straddle asked him what he would take to drink.

"Oh!" replied Tim, "arn't at all 'tickler, sir, any thing like as you may happen to ha' by yer."

"Open that bookcase," said Straddle, "and you'll see some brandy."

"Where be I to get glass to drink em out on?"

"Put the bottle to your mouth, old boy, and pull away," said Blowhard.

"I 'ool," said Tim; he did, and after rubbing the neck of the bottle with his coat sleeve, jammed the cork in, and replaced the bottle.

While Tim was thus engaged, Blowhard was requested by Straddle, who hated any trouble, to return a written acceptance of the invite in their joint names, while he proceeded to pump Tim.

" Very good brandy that, eh? Mr.—What's your name?"

" Timothy, sir—calls me Tim—and all's one to I. 'Tis capital brandy. Rather moreish though. Ha! ha! ha!"

" Try him again, Tim."

" I 'ool," said Tim, and he did, and smacked his lips approvingly.

" Very nice lady your mistress, Tim, eh?"

" Out of the way nice," said Tim, " she knows nothin' bout horses, and lets I buy, swop, and sell 'em for she. Then she never 'quires 'bout price o' oats, beyans, hay, nor stra, saddles, bridles, sponges, brushes, clothes, nor physic—she *is* a out o' the way nice 'ooman and a man's a nass as wouldn't sakeryfice some o' his comforts to live with one sich."

" Try one more sip of brandy, Tim."

" I 'ool," said Tim, and he did.

"You must have a snug place of it, Tim, eh?"

"Snuggerer nor not," said Tim, "and so I did ought. Five and forty of the very best years of my vallyble 'xistence have been 'voted to their sarvice. I was errand-boy, shop-boy, boot, shoe, and knife-boy; looked after nags, milked cows, waited at meals, shut up shop, seed all safe a' nights, and slept in the cellar, and all for four-pund-ten a year and my grub, and never had no vails nor perkisits. Things is altered now, and I'se content."

"Take one more sip, Tim."

"I 'ool," said Tim, and he did.

"How do you like your young master, Tim?" said Blowhard, holding out the note he had written in answer to the invite.

"He?—he's a nass," said Tim, snatching the note. "Hope there's another letter in a day or tow coming to you gentlemen — happy to bring it — capital brandy — finished the bottle — hope there's more in the cupboard—eh?"

"Plenty," said Straddle. "If not, there's lots more at Scott's. Shut the door after you,

Tim; and if you meet any body that asks after me, say I'm not at home."

"I 'ool, sir," said Tim, winking, and he did so to no less than three tailors, two bootmakers, one pastrycook, and a bookseller, all of whom met him on the stairs, with their "little bills" in their hands.

"Timothy, my Fidelio," said Miss Jilks to him, when he brought back the note, "did you behold the inscribers of this epistle."

"'Seed two o' the nicest young chaps as I've not clapp'd eyes on for some time, mum," said Tim, "two o' the pur-litest and generousest gen'lemen as can't possible be, and I never—(tasted such good brandy he was going to say)—shan't feel no way back'ard in 'veying another note to 'em agin, 'even in middle o' night.'"

Thus was Miss Violetta prejudiced in favour of Straddle and Blowhard, by the favourable representations of her only favourites, Byron Scott Montgomery and Timothy Thornback.

"Blowhard, old fellow," said Straddle, when Tim had vacated, "what does she mean by 'music and conversation,' eh?"

"Why, tea, thrumming, twaddle, and turn out, I suppose," replied Blowhard.

"But suppose she gets on about musicians, painters, and poets, what the deuce are we to do? I never was introduced to any performers in those lines in my life."

"Oh! you can just nod your head and look knowing, and leave her to do the talking part herself."

"No, that won't do," said Straddle, "she may ask a straightforward question and find out the imposition at once."

"Set her down to singing then," said Blowhard, "and keep her at it all the evening, she can't sing and talk too."

"She may between the heats. Besides, I want to come the amorous while you keep young Jilks to the piano. I'll tell you what we'll do—send out for a biographical dictionary, and get up the names, dates, and styles of the principal professionals."

I, Peter Priggins, procured the book on tick, and the young men worked hard at it all day, at least Blowhard did—Straddle found it too much trouble.

In the evening, after qualifying themselves with claret, and paying peculiar attention to their dress, which they took especial care should be in the quiet and philosophical style, they presented themselves at the door of Miss Jilks's lodgings, and were admitted and properly ushered in by Tim.

During tea-time, and in the presence of Tim, who waited, the conversation was confined to general subjects, but, when Tim and the tea-things vanished, Straddle boldly launched out into what he impudently and imprudently called his favourite subject, the fine arts, and, after making two or three very bad shots, begged and entreated of Miss Jilks to favour him with one of her favourite airs.

Miss Jilks blushed, but began denuding her fingers and long arms of her long gloves, and inquired, "Do you love Mozart, Mr. Straddle?"

"To distraction, madam—to madness, though I cannot but say that in my earlier days I preferred the symphonies of Murillo, and the canzonets of Claude Loraine," said Straddle, looking amorous and enthusiastic.

Miss Jilks stared, and thought something was wrong, but was not quite certain, so she went to the piano, and Straddle stood behind her begging her to nod when he should turn over, as he was rather short-sighted. Blowhard crammed the greater portion of a white muslin handkerchief into his mouth to prevent his laughing.

Miss Jilks sang, "Ah ! Perdona," in a very languishing manner, while Straddle nodded his noddle between the bars, pretending to keep time, and sighed profoundly in the pauses.

"Beautiful! sublime! heavenly!" cried Straddle, when she had finished. "I have not the slightest hesitation in asserting that neither Metastasio, Melancthon, or Moliere could have sung that air, Maestros di Capelli as they were, with half the correctness that you have done, Miss Jilks."

"Really, sir, you are too complimentary," replied Miss Jilks, looking excessively pleased.

"Permit your nephew, madam, to favour us while we sit and listen. Jilks, oblige me with an air from Racine or Tasso."

"We haven't a copy, have we, aunt?" said Jilks.

"I fear not," said Violetta.

"Never mind," said Straddle, "one of the simple melodies of Carlo Dolce, or Canalletti, or any other master you please, will do as well."

"How kind you are," said Violetta. "Before he commences singing, tell me, Mr. Straddle, does not my nephew's face remind you of the busts of some of our most eminent poets?"

"The astonishing resemblance made me anxious to make his acquaintance, and that of his fair aunt's, the moment I beheld him," said Straddle, throwing a gleam of intense admiration from his grey eyes.

"You're fond of poetry, Mr. Straddle?"

"Excuse me, madam, I am not *fond* of poetry," said Straddle, "I *dote* on it. I breathe and live upon it. There is not a poet, I may venture to say, from Wouvermans to Sir Geoffrey Wyattville, whose works I have not devoured."

"What a memory you have!" said Miss Jilks.

"Favour me with one or two of your favourite passages."

"Excuse me," said Straddle, "I have a bad memory. I recollect the sentiments, the—the—the ideas—the notions—the—the glorious emanations and scintillations of my author — but I cannot remember the intoxicating verbalities wherewith he clothes them. Besides, we are keeping Mr. Jilks waiting."

"Oh! never mind, Mr. Straddle, *do, do* favour me," said Violetta.

"I assure you, madam, such is the treachery of my memory even in names—simple as *they* are, that I once attributed a very fine Dutch picture of humble life, painted by the celebrated Wilkie to Teniers—I did, indeed, madam," said Straddle, perspiring violently, and looking to Blowhard for support.

"Strike up, Jilks," said Blowhard, "now it's calm."

Jilks sung "Batti, Batti," very badly, but both Straddle and his friend applauded him loudly, and then the former, for fear of getting involved again in poetics, prepared for a duet,

then another solo, and another duet, until the time came for saying adieu, which he did in pathetic tones, and with a rather hard squeeze of Miss Violetta's fingers.

Miss Jilks rang the bell, and bade Tim bring a little marasquino and curaçoa—but both Straddle and Blowhard positively declined it, asserting that they never touched any thing after tea—particularly spirits—which was true, for they never drank tea.

"You don't indulge, then, in that enticing and intoxicating practice of inhaling the fumes of the Virginian weed?" inquired Miss Violetta.

"We abhor it," answered Straddle for both, and making a wry face.

"Delightful!" said Miss Jilks — "farewell! *au revoir!*"

"D—d odd," muttered Tim, as he ushered them down stairs, "what made his rooms smell so strong of baccy this morning!—if it warn't Virginny, it was short-cut or returns. Here's summut up, I can see. He don't keep such capital brandy for nothing."

"Jilks," said Straddle, forgetting himself, "you may as well come to my rooms, and have a cigar and a little brandy and water before you go to bed."

"Why, I thought you told my aunt you never smoked or touched spirits," said Jilks, "and I wanted to taste the marasquino and curaçoa; they were got on purpose for you, and she won't draw a cork for me."

"You wouldn't be such a soft one," said Blowhard, "as to own to fumigation and night-caps before a lady? Do you never smoke, Jilks?"

"Why," said Byron Scott Montgomery, "I once—only don't tell aunt—I once smoked a bit of cane, but it made me very ill."

"You shall try a mild queen's cigar, a real Havannah, this evening, Jilks, and wash it down with Regent's punch," said Straddle.

"I certainly should like," said Jilks; "but if my aunt was to find it out —"

"How the deuce can she find it out, unless you split upon yourself?" inquired Blowhard.

"I don't know — only there's Timothy, he's got a nose like a wasp's," said Jilks.

"You don't mean to say Tim, my friend Tim, is an informer?" asked Straddle.

"By pursuing a virtuous line of conduct," began Jilks, copybook fashion, "I prevent —"

"Oh! that's all humbug," said Blowhard.

"Infernal twaddle," said Straddle. "Where does Tim roost?"

"Roost?" said Jilks.

"Yes, where does he sleep?"

"Oh! at the Shirt and Shotbag, where the horses are."

"Then send for him," said Blowhard, "and we'll soon settle Tim. He'll never inform again, rely on it."

"Settle! You don't mean murder him?" asked Jilks.

"Oh, no!" said Straddle, "merely give him a quietus in a very harmless way."

"There's no occasion to send for him," said Jilks; "for as soon as he has locked up at home, he always comes down to college to valet me, take my things away to brush, and so on."

Mr. Jilks had scarcely said these words, when Tim knocked, and was admitted at the college-

gates. Walking up to his young master, he beckoned to him, saying, "Come along and be racked up for the night, Master Byron ancettero," which Tim used as an abbreviation of the two names which he never could remember.

"Blowhard," said Straddle, "take Mr. Jilks to my rooms, and I will be with you immediately." As soon as they were gone, he went up to Tim, who was rather amazed at having his orders disobeyed for the first time, and said to him in low and confidential tones, nudging his elbow at the same time, "Tim — Mr. Jilks is going to smoke a cigar."

"'Blessed if a be though!" said Tim. "What a precious mess I—"

"Nonsense, Tim — you wouldn't mind one more glass of that excellent brandy? and then you know you said your master was an ass—it will be capital fun to see him drunk — eh — Tim?"

"Capital!" said Tim; "but then if missus—"

"How can she know if you don't tell her, Tim? and I'm sure you never split!" said Straddle.

"That's according!" said Tim. "Do you smoke?"

"Decidedly," said Straddle. "Half a dozen regalias every night."

"Then how cam ye to tell Miss Vi as ye 'bhorr'd it?"

"Politeness, Tim—politeness," said Straddle.

"Gammon!" said Tim, "and I know'd it."

"Never mind, Tim, come along and join us," said Straddle, dragging the unresisting domestic into his rooms, where his master and Blowhard were already "lit up," as they say of illuminations.

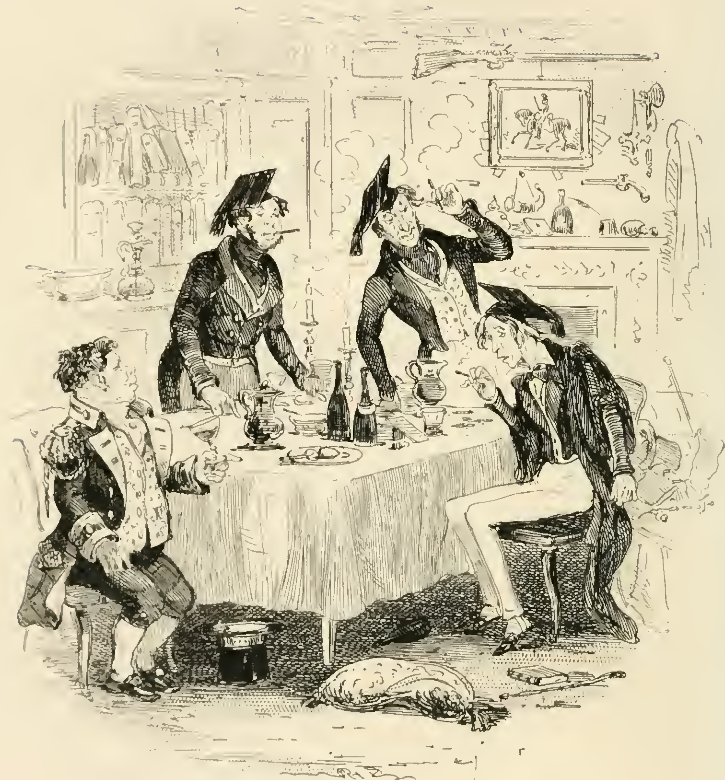
"Now, Tim," said Straddle, "shut the outer door, take a seat, and draw up to the table—don't be shy—never mind your master."

"I don't," said Tim, "do I young 'un?"

"Well there now, Tim, there's the brandy, and there's the water, help yourself."

"An you are no dejection," said Tim, "and ha' got any handy, I rather prefers rum o' nights. It's moisterer to the palate, and leaves a sneatch behind it in t' morning."

"Quite right," said Blowhard, "I always



[illegible] disagree with some people?

drinks the king's allowance — here — I'll help you — there's a regular nor-nor-wester; down with it. Will you have a cigar?"

"No thank 'e," said Tim, when he'd tossed down the grog without the least hesitation, "I never smokes cigars, they're so near one's nose, and mine's red enou' already."

"Well! take another glass of grog, Tim," said Straddle.

"I 'ool," replied Tim, helping himself. "It do strike I," said Tim, looking first at his master and then at Blowhard, "that young Master Byron ancettero's pipe don't go over pleasant— look how precious pale he's a turning, for all the world as if he'd been a murdering a turmut, and washing of his face in the blood on him."

Tim was right, for Jilks felt very sick, and would have dropped from his perch if Blowhard and Straddle had not rushed to him, and, supporting him on each side, taken him out of the tobaccoy atmosphere into the open air.

"Give un to me," said Tim, lifting the almost insensible body of Mr. Byron ancettero

upon his shoulder, "I'll put un to snooze and come back and finish t' grog."

"Now, Blowhard," said Straddle, "this is just what I wanted. We must make friends with Tim, get a hold upon him somehow, or my plans with his mistress will fail. It strikes me that Tim is sharp, and knows that if his mistress gets a master, he shall not have to swap and sell the horses, buy the corn, and execute many other commissions, out of which he gets a larger percentage than he ought. We must ply him with liquor, for I don't think a little will sew him up."

"Here's to begin," said Blowhard, as he filled up Tim's half-consumed tumbler with pure rum.

Tim soon returned, and gave a very ludicrous description of his master's miserable condition. The exertions he had made in carrying and putting him to bed seemed to have aided the operation of the rum, for his eyes sparkled, his nose grew redder than usual, and his tongue ran very rapidly. The young men plied him with strong grog, and laughed at his stories,

which induced him to tell fresh ones, at which they laughed still louder, and told him he was a "regular brick."

"Ah!" said Tim, suddenly changing his tone from gay to grave, and looking despondingly, "if it warn't for my old 'oman, what a jolly cock I should be!"

"What! your mistress?" said Straddle.

"No, no, bless 'e, no!" said Tim, "my wife — my lawful wedded wife — I don't keep a missus, missus do keep I."

'Oh! you're married then, Tim," said Blowhard.

"'Blessed if I bain't," said Tim, "jined together for life—for better nor worser—for richer nor poorer—till—"

"Got any children—any Timothyculi?" asked Straddle.

"Children!" replied Tim — "blessed if I arn't — nine as fine prodigies as ever you seed, and all on t'em blessed with 'straordinary appetites."

"What! they pull hard upon the wages— eh — Tim?" inquired Blowhard, filling his tumbler.

"Wages, vails, and parkistits hasn't nothing at all to doin wi it," said Tim, "if it warn't for my native 'genuity and 'scrimination, they'd a bin atomies long afore this—I've been obligated for to shorten the osses' 'lowances many a time to keep 'em fro' starvin."

"Then," said Straddle, "you've a means of your own—a sort of plan for filling the exchequer, I suppose."

"Jist haven't I?" said Tim, recovering his spirits, and winking violently. "Old master didn't promote the idication of the workin classes for nuffin."

"How do you manage then, Tim?" said Blowhard.

"Why, you see," said Tim, thrown off his guard, and deprived of his usual caution and cunning, by the "repetatur haustus"—"my missus is a very 'nevolent Christian—jines the 'vangelicals, and does a 'finity o' good. She's one of the Dorcas s'ciety for 'spensation o' soup, blankets, calico, and 'ligious principles, no end o' sheep's heads and tracks, for broth and private 'stribution, do she buy—leastways I buys

for she. She promotes the propogation of infants by keepin of a stock of secondhand babby linen allays ready on the shortest o' notices, and grinding down taters to counterfit hingy arrerroot. Never lets the raggedest wag-her-bones go away without relief."

"She's a kind-hearted creature, by Jove!" whispered Straddle to Blowhard; "and I'll bet any odds the rascal makes a nice thing of her."

"She gets imposed upon sometimes, I should think," said Blowhard, winking to his friend, to let him know he understood his meaning.

"She would if it warnt for I," continued Tim; "but charity, says I, begins at home—so I allays keep plenty o' small change, and, when she gies I a shilling or sixpence to give to a idle wag-her-bones at the door, I pockets the silver, and 'spenses her 'nevolence in coppers. Then she makes I keep a list o' charitable objicks—I've got one in my pocket now—for she distends her charities wherever she goes. There it is—read it," said Tim, pulling out a greasy

pocket-book, and extracting a paper, the contents of which were as follows:—

Jeams smith—rumatis . .	2*s.* 6*d.*
wider anes—2 babby . .	4*s.* 6*d.*
jon rite—leg bruk . . .	1*s.* 0*d.*
sall tims—wiout a bed . .	2*s.* 6*d.*
bill joy—kikken pox . .	1*s.* 0*d.*
loosy fox—un'fortin gal .	5*s.* 6*d.*

"There," said Tim, "now you'd hardly think as all those 'dividuals means Mrs. Thornback?"

"What, Jane Smith, Widow Haynes, and the rest of these unfortunates are all—"

"Gammon, every one on 'em," said Tim.

"Come, Tim, you don't drink," said Straddle, placing a bit of folded blank paper into Tim's hand, which he carefully replaced in his pocket-book, and putting the original "list of charitable objects" into his own waistcoat-pocket.

"No more—no more to-night," said Tim, rising and staggering to the door. "Happy to oblige you any other evening—know when I've had enow."

"Well, good night, Tim," said Straddle, closing the door after him; "and if I have not got your head into a noose, I'm very much mistaken."

"So," said Blowhard, "this is 'Tim, my Fidelio,' is it? Why I never met with such an imposing old rascal in my life."

"Then," said Straddle, "you've been lucky, for the character is by no means an uncommon one. I knew one fellow who realized £400 per annum, by shamming preacher, and collecting for the distressed brethren of his church; but Mr. Tim's days are nearly over, depend upon it."

On the following morning, Timothy Thornback rose very shaky and very thirsty, but soon braced his nerves, and quenched his thirst with one quart of Mr. Rakestraw's strongest beer, which, with two mutton chops and an onion, constituted his usual morning meal. Tim was fond of his beer even as a boy, and old Jilks, when he first took him into his service, was surprised to find that he was forced to brew a great deal more frequently than he had used to

do, especially best beer. How it went he could not conceive, as he always kept the key of the tap in his own waistcoat pocket, and never intrusted it to any one but his old housekeeper, who never indulged in any thing stronger than tea but gin. He hid himself in the cellar one day behind some large casks, and presently Tim came down to draw the small beer for luncheon. He set the large jug down on the floor under the small beer tap, and turned it on, leaving it to be filled at its leisure. He then clambered up to a high shelf, and took down a bean-stalk about eighteen inches long, and having extracted the bung of the strong beer barrel, inserted the hollow bean-reed, and sucked away until he had had enough. He then carefully bunged down the cask again, and restored his simple hydraulic instrument to its place.

Old Jilks got from the apothecary's a few grains of tartarized antimony, and strewed them on the inside of the bean-stalk. When Tim went down to draw the beer for dinner, he had, as usual, his pint from the strong barrel in the usual way. While he was waiting at dinner, he felt

very queer, and could not account for it; his eyes felt dim, and his head giddy, his knees seemed to fail him, and a violent perspiration broke out all over him.

"Violetta, my dear," said Jilks to his daughter, "the rats drink our ale."

"Impossible, papa," said the young lady.

"It's a fact, I assure you; but I've settled them — I've poisoned the cask — stirred in a pound of arsenic this morning—one half pint of that strong beer would poison half the town. If any body were to taste it even, they would feel first of all dim about the eyes, then giddy, weak about the knees, perspire violently, and then feel very sick."

Tim, who knew he had swallowed enough to poison the whole town, and felt the symptoms exactly as his master described them, fell on the floor with a deep groan, exclaiming, "Then I'm a murdered arrand-boy."

All was confusion, a doctor was sent for, and from a hint given him by the old banker, he found it necessary to bleed poor Tim, shave his head, clap a blister on his peritoneum, and ad-

minister a severe series of emetics and cathartics, before he could extract the virus of the arsenic from his veins.

Tim never practised hydraulics again, but contented himself with extracting a few coppers from the till now and then, and getting his beer at a neighbouring public.

After Tim had had his breakfast at the Shirt and Shotbag, he rubbed down his horses and his young master, and went to wait upon Miss Vi at breakfast.

" Tim, my Fidelio," said Miss Vi, after she had moistened the staple commodity of the celestial empire, " have you any meritorious miserables, claimants on the superfluous talents committed to my trust, this morning?"

" Yes, mum," said Tim, " fifteen or sixteen shillings worth of charitable objics in my list, and all on 'em miserable in the 'xtreme."

" I'm glad to hear it," said Miss Jilks. " Let me see your list."

Tim searched his pocket-book in every creek and crevice, but the list was not to be found.

" Why, wa'at can I ha' done wi it?" said

Tim, looking to his mistress for information, which it was quite out of her power to give him.

"When did you see it last, Tim?"

"Last night as ever was, mum, when I was reading my blessed bible, 'cording to your 'xpress commands," said Tim, looking conventically, "I was at it all the evenyn."

"Then you probably used the paper to mark the passage where you left off," said Miss Jilks. "Did you confine your search after grace to the gospel, or did you refresh your inward man with a mixture of Mosaic and Christian comforts?"

"Mixture? comforts?" said Tim, soliloquizingly, "that's it—I have it;" and added, aloud, "I 'members me now, mum, and I'll go and fetch un."

Tim hurried down to college, and went to Mr. Straddle's rooms. He knocked three different times with a modest single rap, to which a dead silence was the only response. He knocked again, and looked through the keyhole, but could see nothing. On his substituting his

ear for his eye, he could hear Mr. Straddle very plainly humming,

"Could a man be secure."

"Why don't he answer?" said Tim to himself. "Oh! I knows. Mr. Straddle, it's only me, Timothy Thornback."

These words, which were spoken in a very loud key, did as keys ought to do — opened the door.

"Well, Tim," said Straddle, "how's your mistress? When you want to get into my rooms another time give two loud double raps, and one heavy kick, and I shall know it is not a dun."

"I 'ool," said Tim. "Missus is pretty well, thank'e, but that a'nt it. You prigg'd my list of charitable objics last night, and missus wants it, as she's a goin for to 'spense her 'nevolence as usual."

"I mean to keep that list, Tim," said Straddle.

"What! prig my property? Why, it's petty larceny. And what's the use on un to you?" inquired Tim.

"You and I, Tim, had better understand one another at once," continued Straddle, "I mean to marry your mistress, Tim, and if—"

"The devil ye do?" said Tim, "why she's old enow to be the mother on ye."

"—And if you attempt to betray me, or interfere with my plans, I produce that list, and the little confessions you made last night before two competent witnesses, which will open Miss Jilks's eyes to your rascality, and deprive you of a very lucrative place. Now, if you aid me, instead of thwarting me, I will, after the knot is safely tied, set you up in a flourishing public, and put all your little boys and girls out to school. You fully understand, Tim?"

"Yees," said Tim, "I think I do—but only just let I have un for a minnit, just to copy un—do now?"

"No, Tim, with your fertile imagination, you can easily invent a few ailments and misfortunes that will impose upon your mistress quite as well as this list of charitable objects, which does not go out of my possession, except to be handed up to my lord at the assizes, some day

when you are being tried for robbing your employer," said Straddle, looking stern.

"Then you won't tell o' I, if I don't tell o' you?" asked Tim.

"Certainly not. You may go, Tim. Shut the door after you, and remember, I don't owe a farthing in the world, and never smoke."

"Oh! I see now," said Tim, "you never was 'xtravagant, and wants nothin of missus but her lovely person. That's the gammon, eh?"

"Exactly," said Straddle, "I see we understand one another."

Tim returned to his mistress with a newly-invented list of miserables, and Straddle went to call on Byron Scott Montgomery, whom he found very ill in bed from the effects of the last night's rash indulgence in a cigar and brandy and water.

"Well, Jilks, old fellow, not up yet?" said Straddle.

"Oh! Mr. Straddle, I've been *so* ill, and that bad man, Timothy, has been threatening to tell my aunt. I was obliged to give him a whole week's pocket-money to get him not to inform against me," said Jilks.

"An old rogue! But is your aunt, Miss Violetta, so violent against smoking, eh?" inquired Straddle.

"I can assure you," said Jilks, "she has threatened me over and over again, very solemnly, that if ever I smoked a cigar, or tasted spirits, she'd leave every farthing of her fortune to the Foundling Hospital and the Female Penitentiary. I'm at the mercy of that villain, Timothy Thornback, for ever!"

"You have placed yourself in a very unpleasant position, young man," said Straddle, menacingly, "but, when I'm your uncle, I may induce your aunt to be less strict in her injunctions."

"You my uncle," cried Jilks, sitting bolt upright in bed, and shoving his nightcap off his eyes to see more clearly.

"Yes, Mr. Byron ancettero, I mean to marry your aunt—the aunt that has cherished in her heart so ungrateful and disobedient a viper from his earliest childhood," said Straddle. "You will not endeavour to prevent the happy union, I am sure, for fear *I* should let her into

your real character. Take things easy, and you may yet enjoy yourself as you please, without fear of Timothy, who is in my power. Thwart me, and you are ruined for life. I leave you to meditate upon this. I shall behave handsomely, depend upon it. Goodbye, till dinner-time."

CHAPTER XXI.

Mr. Straddle having ensured the secrecy and assistance of Timothy Thornback and Byron Scott Montgomery Jilks, made further arrangements for uninterruptedly laying siege to the purse and person of Miss Violetta Jilks. He left his oak open for two or three mornings in succession, and convinced all his tradesmen who kindly called upon him, that it would be in his power to pay them their "little accounts" by the end of term. Under this conviction they ceased to annoy him, except to request further orders.

Miss Violetta rode out every day. She was really fond of horse exercise, and rode well: her figure too looked remarkably juvenile on horseback, and, as she wore a green veil and a very jaunty black beaver, she appeared much younger than she was, and might have passed for a good-

looking, elegant middle-aged lady. Though she varied her rides, and one day visited Woodstock, and cantered about the park; another day sauntered amidst the chaste glades of Bagley Wood, then roamed about the grounds of Nuneham, or galloped over the heights of Shotover, and honoured with her presence the village of Wheatley —that most bull-baitingest and cock-fightingest of villages, as its inhabitants describe it — or wandered amidst the wilds of Whichwood Forest —by a very strange chance Mr. Straddle always happened to be riding out the same road. He joined her as a matter of course, and made himself very agreeable, by pointing out to her all the finest prospects, and paying her those little attentions which are particularly agreeable to ladies of a certain age. He was rewarded for his politeness by an invitation to tea, and music in the evening, with his friend Mr. Blowhard, and it is needless to say he always accepted the invitation.

Jilks, who hated riding out with his aunt, got off under a plea that his lectures required all his time; and, as his aunt insisted upon two hours a

day being devoted to poetry and light literature under her own immediate tutorship, she considerately excused her nephew's attendance during her rides.

Jilks was delighted, and felt very much obliged to Straddle for offering to take his aunt off his hands. As to her £3000 per annum, it was a bore to lose that, but then his father was very rich, and would keep him in flourishing circumstances until his aunt died — which he fancied would not be long first — and then all her money would come to him, unless she had a family, which he considered an impossibility. He twanged his guitar, and strummed at his piano, all the morning, and idled away the rest of the day in a most satisfactory manner. After ten o'clock at night, when, with Straddle and Blowhard, he bade farewell to his aunt, he indulged in gradually increasing potations of brandy and water, and acquired a proficiency in smoking, unawed by the threats of Timothy Thornback, who, seeing that his influence over "the young un" was gone, wisely participated in the creature-comforts provided for and by his master.

He procured himself a stock of pipes and returns, and, whilst his master indulged in cigars in his own room, he quietly lighted up his clay in the scout's closet.

Jilks, who did not quite like the society of Straddle and Blowhard, whom he looked upon as old stagers compared with himself, formed an intimacy with one Mr. Rookington, a commoner of his own college. This gentleman was the son of a clergyman, who kept an endowed grammar-school in the country. He was the eldest of eleven little pædagoguities, and consequently straitened in his means. At school he displayed a great deal of ingenuity in procuring a greater supply of pocket-money than his father could afford to allow him, by taking bribes from the other boys not to disclose certain little plots and plans which were laid for robbing orchards and henroosts, and introducing exciseable articles into the school. He would do anything for money, and was ready at all times to take all the pills and black doses supplied to the sick-room at sixpence a-head, and drink the water-gruel afterwards for threepence extra.

When he came up to Oxford with a small exhibition, and an additional £60 per annum, which his father endeavoured to allow him by pinching himself and his children at home, he looked about him for a victim, upon whom he might sponge for those little luxuries in which his own limited income would not allow him to indulge. He toadied half a dozen men successfully for a short time, but, after he had fed upon them for two or three terms, without hinting at giving a return party, they gradually dropped his acquaintance. He was thrown upon his own resources, and fared anything but sumptuously every day, until Mr. Jilks came into residence. Rookington was a great physiognomist, and there were strong lines indicative of spoonery plainly engraved on the "mug" of Mr. Jilks; he, therefore, wisely resolved to victimize him to a great extent. He first of all scraped an acquaintance with Timothy Thornback at the stables of the Shirt and Shot-bag, and, by a judicious and generous bribe of sixpenn'orth of gin and water, obtained from him all the particulars of his master's habits, tastes,

and peculiarities. Thus furnished with a *carte du pays*, he called upon and introduced himself to Mr. Jilks By assisting him in his lectures, listening with profound attention to his musical performances, and paying him the most fulsome compliments upon his poetic effusions, he won Mr. Jilks's heart, and gradually withdrew him from the society of Straddle and Blowhard. He kindly breakfasted with him every morning, that he might read over his lecture to him; lunched with him, that he might listen to a portion of a new epic poem, which was to astonish the world; wined and spent the evening with him, after his return from his aunt's, that he might revel in the sweet sounds of the guitar and pianoforte, for which instruments he professed an excess of admiration when played upon by such very skilful hands as those of Mr. Jilks.

The following letter from Miss Jilks to her sister in India, after a three weeks' residence in Oxford, will give the reader an insight into that lady's opinions of things in general, and Mr. Straddle in particular:—

"My dearest love, Euphrasia,

"Separated as we are, I fear for ever, by the mountainous and furious billows of the great Pacific Ocean, which my ardent imagination depicts to me as far exceeding the highest waves in Chelsea Reach, in which my personal safety was once imperilled in a stormy voyage to Putney Bridge—I shudder now as I recal the remembrance of it to my heart of hearts—the only means of communicating to you the mutabilities of my earthly career is by sending you a line across the line by the packet-ship Dontcareabit, Captain Bungalow, teak-built and copper-fastened.

"Your eldest son and heir, Byron Scott Montgomery, having completed his incipient educational exercises, under the care and tuition of several respectable reverend gentlemen in succession, (some of whom, my dearest love, I regret to say, wished to transfer their attentions from him to myself, in order, I suppose, that I might have benefit of clergy in the management of my property) I deemed it right that he should participate in those professional advantages which

the Universities alone can confer. I have selected Oxford as the scene of his future honours and distinctions, in preference to Cambridge. Oxford is more classical, and at Cambridge so much time is taken up in drawing out all sorts of Chinese-puzzle-like figures, with all the letters of the alphabet at the corners of them, that I am convinced it must cramp a genius in which the poetic and imaginative hold despotic sway. Though Byron Scott Montgomery is musical, I do not see the necessity for his learning conic sections that he may be able to define the 'music of the *spheres* ;' and *triangles* are only required in a full orchestral band. He is, I am happy to say, unaddicted to sporting propensities, and therefore cares nothing for *trigger*nometry. By the advice of the last of his seventeen reverend tutors I have entered him, (such, my dearest love, is the correct term, like 'entering' a horse for a plate) at St. Peter's College, Oxford, as a gentleman-commoner, a rank that confers upon him many advantages ; among the rest that of paying double fees and double battels — that is, his tavern bills for eating and drinking

— and wearing two silk gowns, one of which, the *dress* gown, is very like a parish clerk's, in London, with a lot of little silk tassels about it, and a trencher cap, covered with pure black silk velvet.

"I confess, my dearest love, that I found many things in Oxford diametrically opposed to my preconceived notions of college matters. On my arrival at St. Peter's, I inquired for the lady of the establishment, and was told that the statutes forbade any such appointment. The principal being a *célibat*, modesty would not permit my calling upon him; I therefore wrote him a note, and, after I had established myself in convenient lodgings, which I did in a few hours, through the agency of my faithful and prudent servant, Timothy — my fidelio, as I call him — (who got them for six guineas a week, and ten shillings the maid) I was called upon by the Bursar — a sort of house-steward and groom of the chambers — a very gentlemanly man, who says he's very fond of turtle and East India preserves and pickles (you had better send some over to him, as it may forward Byron Scott Montgomery's

views in getting the Newdigate prize) and who kindly favoured me with an introduction to a bedmaker, and pointed out to me a set of vacant apartments.

"I went down to college with Byron Scott Montgomery, and inquired for the bedmaker, of No. 9 staircase, expecting to see a nice nurse-like, middle-aged, respectable woman; but even in this department females are prudentially forbidden by the statutes—and I was presented to a masculine bedmaker, six feet high, looking much better adapted for the laborious duties of a porter or chairman, than the gentler ones of shaking up feather-beds and emptying slops. He was very civil, however, and showed me up to the vacant rooms. Oh! my dearest Euphrasia! you have heard of 'ready-furnished apartments' being horrible places, but you cannot form the minutest conception of the horribilities of a furnished apartment in a college. There was not a table, chair, sofa, or bedstead, that had not some of its members mutilated. The carpet was the holeliest of all the holey ones I ever saw. The hearth-rug perforated with red-hot pokers—

the fender jammed flat in front, the looking-glass smashed, and the crockery in a most dilapidated state. Timothy, I am happy to say, undertook to dispose of the old furniture to the greatest advantage ; indeed he succeeded in getting £2. 11*s*. for it, and has made the place habitable for £150, which, he tells me, is dirt cheap.

"Now as to the associates he has met with, poor dear unsophisticated Byron Scott Montgomery has been most providentially felicitous. I had formed an erroneous notion that all the students were like himself, "children of a larger growth," as the poet says ; but, I assure you, many of them are men grown, and very fine young men too, as far as I am a judge. Mr. Straddle is a very good specimen of the class ; but then, he has been in the army, and is a brave young man, who would have shed a deal of blood in his country's defence, only he has never had an opportunity of doing so since the peace was proclaimed—which is very unfortunate ! He, however, has given up the army for the more peaceful pleasures of the church militant. He is reading for orders, and, I have no

doubt, will be one of the firmest pillars of our ecclesiastical edifice. Byron Scott Montgomery is lucky in making his acquaintance. His attentions to me are very pleasing, and, were it not that I have devoted myself and my little income to my dear nephew, I might be inclined to listen to the professions of profound esteem uttered by Mr. Straddle (who is really a good-looking manly man), and exchange a single life for the joys of wedlock; but as long as my nephew conducts himself in the correct way he is now doing—abstemiously avoiding all those little indulgences and excesses in which other young men revel — I shall willingly sacrifice myself upon the altar of lonely celibacy. Mr. Blowhard is also another of our intimates, and, though not so poetically grand, nor so personally interesting as Mr. Straddle, is by no means a despicable specimen of adolescency.

" I ride out every day with Timothy and Mr. Straddle, who, by the merest chance, rides out at the same hour and along the same roads, and is kind enough to join me and point out the beauties of the ruralities through which we canter. Oh !

Euphrasia! if you could but hear how energetic he is in his descriptions, and see how well he sits his horse — a goose-rumped dark bay, with a short dock — you would be delighted. Byron Scott Montgomery, I am sorry to say, is a vile rider — Oh! if he would but take a lesson from Mr. Straddle!

"I have consented to join Mr. Straddle and his friend in a party to Nuneham — a delightfully-retired and unmolested spot, on the banks of Isis—the river which flows near Oxford, navigable for coal-barges and small craft—this very day, and must therefore close my epistolary correspondence. Tim is going with us to wait at table; and I think his presence must prevent all calumnious inuendoes; but, alas! 'be thou as chaste as ice'—you know the rest; nobody knows me up here—and it's of no consequence. — Adieu, my dearest Euphrasia! I hear the creaking of Straddle's boots on the stairs, and can only find time to assure you of the everlasting affection of your sister,

"VIOLETTA JILKS.

"P.S. It is not Straddle after all—only Ti-

mothy, in a pair of his left-off boots—which accounts for the concordance of the creakings. Tim is come to say the gondola waits for me, and to ask if I can eat pigeon-pie and cold lamb and salad. Dear Straddle! how very kind and thoughtful he is. I doat on pigeon-pie, which he poetically terms 'dove tart.'

"V. J."

Before he accompanies the party to Nuneham, I must beg the reader to peruse another letter, which Mr. Jilks is writing to the last of his seventeen tutors, at his particular request:—

"My dear Sir,

"I sit down and take up my pen, as you requested me, to tell you how I got over the examination, previous to my matriculation. It was not near so severe as you led me to expect, for the moment I told the Dean I was to enter as a gentleman-commoner, he said he was sure I should do very well, shut the book, and never asked me a single question, except whether I thought of taking an honorary degree;

which I think I shall, as it's very complimentary and convenient. I have got very comfortable rooms, now they are new furnished, but I don't like getting up to chapel in the morning; and if I go in the evening—and I must go to one or the other—I am apt to go to sleep, which is a sconce. I have got introduced to two nice men enough, only they are as old as yourself—Mr. Straddle and Mr. Blowhard. The former, I think, is doing a bit of strong courtship to my aunt, who is old enough to be his mother; but I don't care about that, as it keeps her attention off me, and I'm not obliged to ride out with her every day, with Tim behind us; and can smoke my cigar, and drink my brandy and water in quiet with my friend Rookington, who, though I have not introduced him to my aunt, for he says he don't like old harridans, is worth two Straddles and half a dozen Blowhards. He's got more discrimination than any man I ever met with; he sees and appreciates my talents, and acknowledges my superiority in poetic and musical acquirements. He's so fond of hearing me play, that he smokes half a dozen cigars

every night, while he listens to me; and has made Tim quite of his way of thinking, and has induced him to take a pipe in the scout's room, to listen to me also.

"I have got the greater part of my poem ready to send in for the Newdigate prize. Rookington, who reads it as it progresses, at luncheon every day, says it is beautiful and must be successful. I have no doubt of his judgment being correct; but, as two heads are always better than one, pray read it, and give me your opinion upon it. Don't correct or alter it, as every author must know his own meaning best. The passages which strike you as particularly good, you can score underneath with a pencil. I am just going on the water with Straddle, who has invited aunt Vi and myself to a party at cold meat at Nuneham; and I mean to take Rookington and my guitar to amuse them on the road—that is the river.

"Your's very truly,

"B. S. M. JILKS.

"P.S. Return the MS. of prize poem by return of post, and make the pencil-marks quite plain."

As Tim wrote home to his wife by the same post, it will be as well for the reader to see his opinions of "life in Oxford:"—

"My Dear missus t,

"i Havunt Rote To yu sunce i bin Here, fur Fere of not havin nuthin satisfacktery to Send inside of It. i rite now Becos i ave Skraped Up 20 pound, And got It in a single not, number 5,440; and If this letter never cums to and yu Send Up to london to the bank, & ave It stoped pamint. i maid a pritty good thing Of yung master's ferniter: i got seven pund Ten For the old, And An ice dosure Of twenty five pursent out of The new, wich is very ansum; & i maks tu pund ten a wik Out of marm Viletty's logins; & i wud ave sent you more munney, but things is so dere in Oxford, & i ave bin forsed To by a pare of nu butes, with wite tops, As broun uns Is kwite Out Of fashin, and tu pare Of doskins, wich Is deer yu no; & i shud a maid A deal of munney on the old sistum, only i was kotched out at It by wun mister straddle, oose got My list of caritabul objics, and menes to marry My

missus; and if i Interfere, he sais he will impose all My expusishuns, & ave me kwarter-sesshund for A brich of Trust, and if It wer only him, i shudnt kare; but There wer wun mister bloard, a frend of hisun, as herd me kunfess all My Trix upon missus, & drink the brandy & warter; & He swares If i split, as He'll turn King's Heavy dunce agin me, so i'm In a clef stik.

" i like Oxford onkimmon, but aint maid So much munney by my nolige of hosflesh as i thort i shud; fur bless you, missus t, they is jist as wide awak as yu can't kunseave, and wen they bets, It aint munney but drink; and as i ave got kartblansh, as Marm Viletty calls as much beer as i like, In the buttry, I seldum bets. Master birun scot mungumry kums It very strong now With grog & segars, as mister straddle ave bin, & informed him all about the list of caritabul objecs, & he never minds me now, as he noes I darnt split, & he's got a yung man as egs him on, & drinks, eats, & smoakes at his xpense every day, And all day, and i helps him.

" The college survints is very nice men, and onkumminin fond of bere; But it korsts um nothin, as they chork It up to there masters. i rides out every da with missus, & as a shillin for tellin mister straddle wich way she mins to go; and He jines her, & i rides behine, wile He gammons hur.

" ime just going to a plase kalld nuneum, to wate at tabul, or rather grassplat, as we're to feed of the grown, and have wot Miss Viletty calls a *dijinnay ally foursheet all frisky.* If mister straddle marys missus, i've no doubt he'll stan sumthin hansum, & then i sets up in the public line, As my privat spekillayshuns wont Be wurth nuthin. there's lots of gals about, But upon my word an honor as a gentlimun, missers t, i never even luks at um.

" giv My love to the littul ones, and rite to me At Mister rakestrors, shirt & shotbag, in sun peter's strit, Oxford; And bliv Me,

Yur feekshunhate husban,

" TIM[y]. THORNBACK.

" P.S. kip a sharp i upon old tunbelly, as kips the gotes, and the momint he's ded, arx

old worts, the gret brewr, for the rifusel of the hous, & ile lay in a stok of trickle & mulasses, redy to fisik his bere."

As soon as Timothy had finished his letter, and put it into the post-office with Miss Violetta's epistle to her sister, and Mr. Jilks's to his late tutor, it was quite time for him to be ready to convey the hampers which contained the materials for the feed *al fresco* to the house-boat. Mr. Straddle had at first intended to hire a four-oared cutter, with an awning to it, and pull Miss Violetta down to Nuneham; but, after a little consideration, he gave up the notion, recollecting his proneness to puffing and perspiring when subjected to any violent exercise. He thought, too, that during the pull he should have no opportunity of saying sweet things to his fair friend, even if he had breath enough to spare, without being overheard by the rest of the party. He therefore hired what is called a house-boat, which Miss Vi chose to call a gondola, and by putting Tim to con, and Blowhard to steer her, and persuading Jilks to

"strike the light guitar" in the stern, and Rookington to "light the light cigar," and listen to him, he contrived to get a quiet *tête-à-tête* inside with Miss Jilks all the way down. Their conversation, which it would be a gross breach of confidence to repeat, was only interrupted by a little interesting timidity on the part of the lady, when passing through the perils of Iffley and Sandford pound-locks. The motion of the water caused the boat to roll a little, and Miss Jilks, purely from fear of being drowned, clung to Mr. Straddle for support, who bravely held her in his arms until the danger was over. Of course he was rewarded for the immense risk he ran, by the warm thanks and still warmer looks of the lady, who permitted him to keep his arm round her waist, in case of the boat's being capsized.

They arrived safely at the cottages at Nuneham, and were welcomed by old Franklin, the retired gamekeeper, in his deer-skin cap, and ushered into the round-house, which a cad, who had been sent down early in the morning for the express purpose, had secured for them.

There were not many people at Nuneham, as Straddle had purposely selected the day of a fight between Jack Perkins and the Sailor Boy, which he knew would attract the under-graduates. The townspeople of Oxford and Abingdon, he was aware, seldom ventured to visit the place, until all the men were gone down. Champagne, after a long and strong pull, is apt to be too exciting; and there have been instances of its stimulating its consumers to commit little irregular rudenesses among the fair *bourgeoises* and their mercantile escorters.

While Timothy was preparing the collation, Blowhard whipping for chubs under the island, and Jilks twanging his everlasting guitar, to the mingled annoyance and amusement of the few visitors assembled on the rustic bridge, and his crony pretending to be absorbed in delight, but really admiring the flavour of his Havannah, Straddle took a delightful stroll — leisurely though, for it winded him—up Carfax Hill. There he halted to recover his breath, and permit Miss Jilks to do the same, and admire the fine view of Oxford. A tip to the gardener pro-

cured them a sight of the private gardens, and a delicate bouquet of the choicest flowers, which Violetta permitted Mr. Straddle to fix in the band which clasped her delicate waist. Another tip gained for them access to the house and pictures; and there Mr. Straddle, who had been getting up "the dictionary of painters" all the morning, displayed such a wonderful knowledge of the style and names of the great masters, as filled Miss Jilks with admiration, and perfectly annihilated the housekeeper, who had got up all the subjects and their illustrators so completely by rote, that, if she missed one picture, she was thrown out, until she went back to the one nearest the door, and recovered the thread of her descriptive powers.

"Oh! Mr. Straddle," cried Miss Jilks, looking extatic, "do look at that splendid marine landscape."

"That, mum," said the housekeeper, "is a shipwreck by—"

"Falconer, of course," said Straddle; "he is certainly inimitable in shipwrecks."

"And there again!" said Miss Jilks, "*do*

look at those lovely young ladies, who must feel very chilly from being so lightly clad."

"Those, mum, is the four seasons, by—"

"Thomson," said Jilks. "Thomson's Seasons are too notorious to need description."

"That ere, mum," continued the housekeeper, in a hurry to get through her work, and *draw* the next party, "is meant to riprisent one of the heathen fables, it's by—"

"Gay, undoubtedly. Gay's fables, my dear Miss Jilks, *you* know to be worth looking at. The Chiaroscuro is brilliant in the extreme," said Straddle, counterfeiting a telescope with his two fists, and pretending to examine the Reubens critically.

"This ere to the right, mum, is a picter of still life—the mouse, a nibbling of the cheese, looks as natural as natural can be; and the cheese itself is much admired—it's by Parme"—

"——Parmesan," said Straddle, "his cheeses are universally admired."

"Parmegiano, we calls him," said the housekeeper.

"It's all the same," said Straddle, "that's

his name in Germany—his native country—here we call him Parmesan, for brevity's sake."

"I knows nothin of that ere, sir," said the housekeeper. "It mought be true, and it moughtn't. That *re*-markible tall gentleman in black, with a death's head 'tween his fistesses, is Amblet the Prince of Dunkirk, by—"

"The immortal Charles Young," said Straddle.

"Young?" said Miss Vi. "I thought Young was celebrated for acting the part, not for painting it."

"Why, my dear Miss Violetta," said Straddle, after coughing six times, and blowing his nose thrice, "Young was an actor, certainly—a regular tip-top-sawyer in his—his—dear me! histrionics; but then what actor can excel, unless he can *paint* characters to the life? eh! my dear Miss Violetta?—this fully accounts for the—the—little—"

The housekeeper fortunately relieved Mr. Straddle's confusion, by informing the party that "her compartment terminated there;" and showing them out with a profound curtesy, hurried off to repeat her catalogue to a fresh company.

During their walk back to the round-house, which Miss Jilks christened "The Rotunda," Straddle said but little, though he sighed loudly and frequently, and pressed the arm which hung on his rather amorously and vigorously. He wisely reserved his extatics until the champagne should have furnished him with a more copious flow of words, and removed any little remnants of reserve from the fair one's bosom.

"Glad you be come, mum," said Tim, who was standing on the grassplat, wiping a bottle of champagne with a napkin, and *hissing* to the motion, as if he was rubbing down a horse, "for Master Byron's so precious hungry, and says if you don't move your old stumps a little livelier, he's blowed if he don't pitch into the pies by hisself."

"Timothy! my Fidelio!" exclaimed the horror-struck Miss Jilks. "Mr. Byron Scott Montgomery never sent *me* such a message as that?"

"Why, it worn't disactly a message," replied Tim, "it wor more of the nater of a observatin."

"Which you ought not to have repeated,

sirrah! you are impertinent, and shock the delicate auricles of your mistress by your vulgarity; begone, sirrah, and get dinner ready," said Straddle, looking kickingly at Tim.

Tim looked sulky, and muttered something about "not having a master yet," and went on very leisurely rubbing down the bottle.

Straddle turned quietly round to Miss Jilks, and said, loudly enough for Tim to hear him, "By the bye, my dear Miss Violetta, I have a little list of charitable objects—"

Tim turned round, and winking deprecatingly at him, assured him the *dejinnay ally foursheet* was quite ready and waiting; he then seized his mistress by the arm, almost pushed her into the cottage, and commenced clattering the plates, and knives and forks, and nudging Mr. Straddle every time he passed him, as a hint not to expose him to his mistress.

Though the dinner was not such a spread as Mr. Straddle would have felt bound to set before his beloved, had he entertained her in his own rooms, or at a hotel, yet the college cook had done his duty by the cold lamb and pigeon-pie;

and the appetite, which invariably attends upon pic-nic-ery, made every viand appear doubly delicious. Though the conversation did not flow very rapidly—for the males were too hungry, and the female too happy to talk—yet the champagne did. Tim, by Mr. Straddle's instructions, kept perpetually popping cork after cork, and filling the glasses as speedily as they were emptied.

Every body, of course, challenged the lady; and Straddle, as a ci-devant militaire, convinced her of the impropriety of ever refusing a challenge; and expatiated as lengthily on the superiority of the wine "of his own importing," as his inordinate appetite would allow him to do. Thus urged, Miss Jilks, as she expressed it, "quaffed the bubbling ambrosial nectar," which had been reluctantly sent from Scott's cellars "on tick" that very morning, wrapped up in whitey-brown paper. Blowhard backed his friend in all his assertions as to the genuineness and authenticity of the importation, and drank largely himself, to prove the truth of the assertions. Rookington never "threw away a chance"

himself; and, under the pretence of making Timothy attentive to Mr. Byron Scott Montgomery's glass, got his own filled twice to every body else's once.

When the dinner was over, and Miss Jilks had taken two or three more glasses of champagne (for Mr. Straddle would not allow her to profane her lips with port, insinuating that champagne alone was suited to ladies and angels, cherubs and seraphs), she proposed a gentle stroll by herself, whilst the gentlemen took their wine. To this Mr. Straddle could not listen, but insisted on joining her, looking exceedingly reproachful at her for imagining that he could prefer wine to "woman, lovely woman," and winking at Blowhard, as much as to say, "all right."

After wandering about the woods for some time, during which Straddle talked an immensity of twaddle about poetry, painting, and music, but with such volubility and obscurity of utterance that Miss Jilks could not by any possibility detect his ignorance or deny any of the opinions he advanced, he led her into a neat

arbour which overlooks the fair city of Oxford, the winding Isis, and its banks for many miles. The arbour, like a pistol-case, was only made to hold "a pair;" and, either from the power of the sun's rays or the champagne, Miss Jilks complained of the heat, and gracefully threw back her green veil, and looked warm and languishing at Mr. Straddle, exclaiming, "heigho! I feel—I feel—very—very—faint."

"My dearest Violetta," cried Straddle, clasping her in his arms, "recline on me."

Miss Vi obediently did as she was bidden, and, as her hand fell upon his shoulder, he applied his lips to one of their legitimate uses, and imprinted a series of kisses upon the lady's, which lasted until the faintness left her, which it did at last—going off like a lucifer match, with a loud "smack."

"You feel better, I trust, my dear Violetta," said Straddle, still keeping her "tight in hand."

"Oh! much better—but faint—very faint still," replied Miss Vi.

Mr. Straddle finding the previous dose had bettered the condition of his patient, and taking

her reply to mean "*repetatur haustus,*" administered a second edition a little more powerful than the first, which proved so reviving that Miss Vi sprung from the physician's arms, dropped her green veil, and cried—"Oh! Mr. Straddle! don't!"

Mr. Straddle knew enough of medicine to know that it ought to be "well shaken when taken," and struggled to keep possession of his fair patient, in which, after several little "don'ts—pray don'ts—how can yous," and other usuals on such occasions, he perfectly succeeded. Miss Vi allowed him to support her in his arms, but kept the green veil down as closely as the green curtain is kept between a comedy and the farce.

Straddle, after keeping the lady and his tongue quiet for some minutes, thought it a seasonable moment to burst out in a fit of extatics.

"My dearest Violetta! *this* is what I call happiness—felicity! here is every thing to delight the eye and the heart! the loveliest of her lovely sex in my arms, and the prettiest view possible in my eye! only observe—to the right, a view of Oxford, that classical abode of dons

and duns — to the left, Abingdon, famed for sacking and smockfrocks—directly opposite us, the park of Radley and its neat farmhouse— the very picture of rural felicity—with a valuable heap of manure within a few yards of its door! Oh, Miss Violetta! as Cicero says in his 'Art of Love'—

"How happy could I be with either!"

I forget the *Latin* words — but that's the sentiment—and a very happy remark it is."

"Very! singularly happy!" said the fair Jilks, sighing profoundly.

"Oh!" continued Straddle, bending his arm and nearly squeezing the breath out of Miss Vi's taper waist, "With such a home as that, and married to the woman of my heart, how happily could I live!"

"Congeniality of souls!" said Miss Vi.

"Make our own butter and cheese," said Straddle.

"Moonlight walks!" said the lady.

"Kill our own mutton," said the gentleman.

"Delightful wanderings by the river's brink, every evening!" cried Miss Jilks.

"Fresh eggs and butter, every morning!" cried Straddle.

"Be all in all to each other," said Miss Vi—

"'The world forgetting—by the world forgot.'"

"Yes," said Straddle, "and brew our own beer! What a perfect picture of happiness!—Oh! my dear Violetta! you must have observed the inward flame which is consuming my vitalities! it cannot have burnt unseen by you—take pity on me, and kindly clap an extinguisher on the combustibles, by confessing that the fire has communicated with the premises of your heart, and that you're not insured against its effects in any office."

"I own I am not insured, Mr. Straddle," sighed Miss Vi, "but show me the policy—the policy of—"

"D—n the policy, marm!" said Straddle, energetically; "let me seize the premium. Be mine, Violetta! let us join our little all together, and live but for each other, on a plain joint and a pudding every day."

"Tempting offer!" cried Miss Jilks, wiping

away a tear with a handsomely-bordered white cambric; "but I must not—dare not consent. I have, from the purest motives of sisterly affection, devoted myself and my little property to the welfare of my musical, philosophical, and poetical nephew, Byron Scott Montgomery Jilks. For his sake I have refused the plighted vows of the Rev. Messrs. Fribble, Frobble, Frumps, and Dumps, with many other reverends too numerous to mention! and for him I must sacrifice you—even you my only, military, academic passion—oh! oh! oh!"

Miss Vi became hysterical and kissed Straddle twice during the fit; a compliment he returned with interest, and renewed the attack thus:—

"But if your nephew should prove unworthy of so noble a sacrifice? if he should be secretly indulging in those little excesses, so degrading to himself and disgusting to you? if he should drink, smoke, sing improper songs? would you, in that case, consent to live a life of single misery, and give your money to one who would waste it on spirituous liquors and tobacco?"

"Never!" exclaimed Miss Jilks, "never! but there are no hopes of that! he's all perfection."

"Is he?" said Straddle, rising rather suddenly, and adjusting Violetta's dress—"Come and see."

He relied confidently upon the exertions of his friend, Blowhard, which were to be used during his absence, and he found that his confidence had not been misplaced. Just as he descended the gravel walk which leads round the back of the round-house, with Miss Jilks leaning on his arm, he heard Byron Scott Montgomery, the nephew for whom she had refused the Reverends Fribble, Frobble, Frumps, and Dumps, *cum cæteris paribus*, and who was "all perfection," singing, in a loud drunken voice, a very improper song.

"Oh! Mr. Straddle—'tis—'tis *his* voice," screamed Violetta.

"Come along, madam," said Straddle; and, jerking her round the corner of the cottage, presented to her astonished eyes Mr. Byron Scott Montgomery, with a cigar in his mouth,

and a very large tumbler of brandy and water in his hand; his upper lip was covered with moustaches of burnt cork, and his head with his hat, set on crosswise, the crown being crushed down nearly as flat as a pancake. His friend, Mr. Rookington, was placed with his back in a corner, and propped up with two chairs, incapable of doing any thing but retaining his cigar between his teeth. Tim was sitting on the ground, with the brandy bottle between his legs, and a pipe between his lips, very nearly as tipsy as his master.

"That strain again," said Blowhard, when he saw Straddle and Miss Jilks were near enough to hear the melody.

"No," said Jilks, hiccupping, "no, it's your turn next—I—I—feel rather queer: Tim, some brandy—besides, that old cat of an aunt of mine will be toddling back soon; she's fool enough to think I never smoke—never have my grog or my——eh?—she's a fool—an old fool, ain't she? she's lots of tin, though, and, I'm to have it all. Tim, some more brandy!—I'm to have every infernal coin she's worth in the world—hurraaah!

"Not one farthing!" screamed Miss Jilks; "Byron Scott Montgomery Jilks, you've alienated my affections for ever. Mr. Straddle, lead me away!"

"You be bothered, you old cat!" cried Jilks, as Straddle carried his aunt away, half fainting, into the house-boat. "Come, Blowhard; Rookington, my boy, let's have a bumper to drink perdition to all old harridans!—three glasses of grog, Tim, and make them strong. And as for Straddle—"

"What of him, sir?" inquired Blowhard, seeing that individual had returned for Miss Jilks's reticule, in which were her salts; "what of him, sir?"

"He's a poverty-struck, meddling, money-seeking, circumventing hypocrite, and I'll expose him," said Jilks, intending to thump the table, but missing it, and hitting Tim on the head.

"You will recollect this insult, Mr. Blowhard," said Straddle, coming forward.

"Certainly," said Blowhard.

"And you, Mr. Rookington." Rooky hic-

cupped, assentingly, which was all he could do. "Mr. Jilks," continued Straddle, "you shall hear from me to-morrow morning."

"You be bothered," said Jilks, courageously, "and that ugly old methodistical cat of an aunt of mine too."

"Blowhard," said Straddle, "put those two beasts into the bows of the boat, and let Tim keep guard over them while you steer us up."

After some strong struggles and positive refusals to move, on the part of Mr. Jilks, in which he was backed by Rookington, who declared he had not "had his whack out," Tim, who had deposited the hampers on board, and signalled the horse-driver, returned to the round-house, and caught his young master round the waist. He then tucked him, gizzard-fashion, under his arm, and carried him off to the boat. In spite of several spiteful kicks on the shins, he got him to the side of the river, where he deposited him on the grass. He then spat on his hands, as all operatives do when about to undertake any unwonted exertion, and, catching him by his coat-collar with one hand, and his sit-

down-upons with the other, hoisted him into the bows. Unluckily for the instrument, but luckily for himself, Mr. Jilks fell upon his guitar, which was crushed as flat as a crumpet, and gave out a last sad sound, which harmonized remarkably with its master's feelings, and the grunt by which he expressed them. Rookington was deposited by the side of his friend, by Blowhard, who then took his station at the helm.

Straddle, who was inside with Miss Violetta, had not so pleasant a voyage up stream as he had anticipated. Miss Jilks, although she allowed him to clasp her waist for fear of accidents, was too much hurt by her nephew's conduct to do any thing else but complain of it in the bitterest terms, or to listen to any thing but indignant observations upon his unworthiness.

Straddle made violent love once or twice between the heats, but it availed him not. Woman-like, Miss Jilks was searching the recesses of her kind heart to find some excuse for Byron Scott Montgomery's conduct—some reason for extending to him her gracious pardon, and reinstating him in her good graces. To

Mr. Straddle's warm solicitations, that she would "say she was his," she replied, "that she could not, would not consent to defeat the plans of her whole life without giving her dear sister's child an opportunity of explaining his extraordinary conduct. She was sure he was not in the habit of indulging in vulgar excesses; the heat of the day, the excitement of the scene, the motion of the boat, must have operated detrimentally to his sobriety."

"But why, my dear Miss Violetta, should he abuse you, his best, his kindest friend?" said Straddle.

"Alas! he knew not what he said!" sighed Miss Vi.

"'*In vino veritas*,'" as Longinus and Mr. Hennekey's wine-vaults say," observed Straddle; "that is, when a man's drunk he don't disguise his real sentiments; and, I'm sorry to say, in his sober moments, my dear Miss Jilks, your nephew is in the habit of speaking of you in terms any thing but complimentary."

"Impossible, Mr. Straddle!" cried Miss Vi.

"He calls you, on my honour," replied

Straddle, "an old cat, an old feminine dog, old harridan, and several other disgusting names, for which, if you will but confer upon me a marital right to do so, I will call him to a severe account."

"I never *can* believe it," said Miss Jilks. "The ungrateful wretch, to whom I have sacrificed all my best years—"

"Not *all!*" insinuated Straddle.

"Well, a *few* of them; and if I knew it for a fact, I do not think it would cost me much to tear him from my heart for ever, and fill up the vacancy with a more worthy object."

"You shall have the most satisfactory proof," said Straddle, just as the barge grated on the gravel of Christ Church Meadow, and Tim cried out, "Now, mum, here we is!"

Blowhard and Tim were left to see Mr. Jilks and his friend Rookington home to college, which they effected by getting Jack Hutton's luggage-barrow from the Angel, whilst Miss Jilks was "seen home" by Straddle, who promised to go back after her nephew.

What with the excitement of the day and

her nephew's naughtiness, Miss Jilks passed a dreamy, uncomfortable night.

As soon as Mr. Straddle had left Miss Jilks, he returned towards the meadow, but not by the principal streets. He was aware that Jack Hutton and Blowhard would cut across the bye-lanes to avoid the proctors. He was quite right in his calculations of their prudence, and met the barrow and its contents carefully covered with a tarpaulin, in a little dirty place called Pembroke Lane, just opposite Tom Gate. As soon as the bodies were safely deposited in Jilks's rooms, and Jack Hutton had been dismissed with an order on the buttery, and a further order to call next morning on Jilks, to be paid for porterage, Mr. Straddle explained to Blowhard his plans for the morrow, and prepared to put them into preliminary execution. Tim was sent to a chemist's, with an order for two papers, each containing five grains of sulphate of zinc. These were carefully dissolved in two large tumblers of hot water, and with difficulty administered to the two invalids. The effect of the doses was speedy and satisfactory; and an appli-

cation of cold water to their heads soon made the intoxicated men perfectly sober. A cup of very strong coffee in about half an hour afterwards restored them to the little senses they were naturally possessed of.

As soon as Tim had reported the success of his prescriptions to Mr. Straddle, who was making up for the self-denial he had practised during the day, by diligent applications to the cigar-box and liqueur-case, Blowhard went up to Mr. Jilks's rooms, and found that gentleman and his friend sipping their mocha, or its Oxford substitute, burnt beans.

"You must be fully aware, Mr. Jilks," said Blowhard, after he had been ordered to come in, "that your language to Mr. Straddle this day was such as no gentleman can put up with. With your abuse of your aunt, disgusting as it was, I have nothing to do; but your insults to my friend can only be atoned for by blood."

"Gammon," cried Jilks, looking as if he had murdered a turnip and washed his face in the blood of it.

"We were all drunk together," said Rookington.

"That I deny, sir," said Blowhard. "You and Mr. Jilks may make brutes of yourselves if you please, but you shall not insult a gentleman with impunity. Mr. Jilks, Mr. Straddle expects you to meet him with pistols in Port Meadow, near the bridge at Woolvercot, after chapel to-morrow morning. Allow me to recommend your disposing of your personalities this night."

"Personalities!" said Jilks, as soon as Blowhard had banged the door after him, "what does he mean?"

"Mean," said Rookington, upon whom a hope of getting something operated like a charm, "why—your property—your personal property — those nicely bound books — that piano — the German flute with light silver keys — the guitar — only it's smashed — your furniture, plate, glasses, and pictures — you *may* be killed, you know, if you go out."

"Go out! what to fight?" screamed Jilks. "Why, I never let a pistol off in my life! My aunt, confound her, would never even let me

play with gunpowder — I *wont* 'go out,' as you call it."

"But you *must*, my dear friend," said Rooky, "or you'll be *cut* for ever."

"But I'm sure to be shot — Straddle's military," said Jilks, "and I can't see the difference between cutting and maiming."

After a very long argument, Rooky succeeded in convincing Jilks that he must not be branded as a coward, and that most probably the pistols would not be loaded with ball. He then put a sheet of paper, and a pen and ink, before him, and begged him to dispose of his property as his heart and good feelings dictated to him.

"But who am I to leave them to?" inquired Jilks—"Tim is—"

"D—n Tim!" said Rooky. "Who is to be your second?"

"*You*, of course," said Jilks.

"Then, I think, my dear friend, that the man who risks rustication, expulsion, and being tried for murder, ought to have some little recompence for the dangers he runs," said Rooky, wiping his eyes and looking romantic.

Jilks took the hint and his pen, and in very shakey, half-legible handwriting, made over all he possessed to his delighted dear friend, who, if he had not had the furniture and other effects in prospectu, would not only have dissuaded Jilks from fighting, but have gone to the dean, or some other authority, and exposed the whole affair.

Jilks next wrote a very penitent letter to his aunt, in which he confessed that ever since he had been up in Oxford, he had gradually acquired a taste for excesses of all sorts, and had ungratefully abused her, his kindest friend, on all occasions. He even told her that his full belief was, that Straddle would never have called him out, but to show his pretended love to a woman *old enough to be his mother,* and whom he wanted to marry merely to be able to pay off his ticks.

This letter was given to Tim, with strict orders to deliver it to Miss Violetta in the morning, if he was not home to breakfast.

Rookington, while his dear friend was writing his farewell to his aunt, put his last will and

testament into his pocket, and hurried off to Sykes's, and ordered that efficient gunmaker to send half a dozen cases of pistols down to St. Peter's for Mr. Jilks's inspection, who would return those he did not require in the morning.

When the weapons arrived, Rooky selected a pair, and taught his friend how to pull the triggers. He then suggested going to bed. Jilks, however, could not go to bed — he was afraid of dreaming. Rooky suggested brandy and water, to which Jilks agreed; and, after taking a tumbler or two, which tasted strongly of brimstone, he fell into a troubled sleep in his chair, where Rooky left him.

In the morning Jilks awoke — stiff, cold, and uncomfortable—he could not tell why—until the proceedings of the previous day and night recurred to him. He made up his mind not to fight, but to use the knowledge his friend had instilled into him the night before, by pulling a trigger at himself. He looked at himself in a glass, and was shocked at the pallor — the pipe-clay pallor of his face, and resolved to bring the

blood into his cheeks by sending a bullet through his head; but the pistols were not loaded, and he did not know how to load them.

Just as he was trying to perform that necessary preliminary, Rookington came in, and pouring out two glasses of brandy, took one himself, and bade his friend swallow the other and follow him immediately. Jilks gulped the liquid, but moved not. Rooky slipped the pistol-case into a carpet-bag, and, seizing his friend, hurried him off to the Hythe Bridge, and forced him into a skiff, which was ready prepared for him. Jilks fell flat in the bottom of the boat, and Rookington took the sculls and pulled away for Port Meadow.

"Tim," said Straddle, about eleven o'clock on the night previous to this eventful morning, "has your master given you any note to your mistress?"

"Yees, sur, he have," said Tim; "he looks onkimmon queer, and says I'se to 'liver it if he isn't home to breakfast."

"Well, Tim," said Straddle, "take a glass

of grog—and mind you deliver that note directly after chapel — I and your master are going to fight a duel, and I wish Miss Jilks to be present — you understand?"

"I does," said Tim, winking and taking off his tumbler.

"You will find us at Woolvercot Bridge," said Straddle; "take one more glass, and then keep your lips closed till you see your mistress to-morrow morning."

"I 'ool," said Tim, and he did.

Miss Jilks lay dreaming of drunken nephews, agreeable militaires, and comfortable meetings by moonlight, when she was roused by a loud knocking at her bedroom door.

"Here's a letter, mum, for you, from Master Byron Scott Montgomery," said Tim, "it's to be delivered immediately."

Miss Jilks slipped on her dressing-gown, and, opening the door wide enough to admit the letter, took it of Tim, delighted to think that her nephew was so much in haste to make the amende honorable. As soon as she had read it, however, she screamed out—

" Tim! Tim! your master 's a murdered man! he's gone out to fight a duel with Mr. Straddle—saddle the horses directly! Tim!—we must prevent bloodshed."

" Where be they a fighting, mum?" asked Tim.

" I don't know — I am sure, Tim — but we must scour the country—raise an alarm — rouse the Vice-chancellor and Proctors. — Where do these sanguinary scenes usually take place, Tim? You must know," said Miss Jilks.

" I don't *knoa*," said Tim; " but I should *think* Port Meadow as likely a spot as any, as it's all open loik, and the cumbattuns can be seen for many miles round."

" Then bring the horses immediately," said Miss Jilks; and by the time Tim brought them, which was not long, as he had them ready saddled by anticipation, his mistress was dressed, and ready to mount. Tim led the way as fast as he could gallop, and they arrived at Woolvercot Bridge just in time to see Byron Scott Montgomery fire his pistol, and fall flat

on his face; while Mr. Straddle magnanimously discharged his into the air, without doing any further damage than making Miss Jilks's horses shy, and spill Timothy Thornback into the canal ditch.

Straddle apologized to Miss Jilks for the alarm he had caused her, and assisted her to dismount.

"My dear Mr. Straddle!" cried she, "*you* are not hurt, I trust."

"No, my dearest Violetta—wounded only in the heart by your fair eyes," replied Straddle, giving her a squeeze as he set her on the ground.

"And my ungrateful nephew, Byron Scott Montgomery!" shrieked the aunt.

"All right, aunty," said Jilks, jumping up, and feeling all danger was past, "that infernal pop-gun went off in my hand, and very nearly shot my toe off."

"He was in a funk, madam," said Rookington, looking disgusted at losing the furniture and other effects of the man he hoped to call the *late* Mr. Jilks.

Miss Jilks walked close up to her nephew, and in an audible whisper told him he was a "little cowardly, ungrateful, debauched puppy, and that she would cut him off with a shilling, and marry Mr. Straddle, though she was '*old enough to be his mother.*'"

"Oh, gammon!" said Jilks, and walked off with his friend Rookington across the meadow to their boat, much happier than when he crossed it before on his way to "the ground."

Within a fortnight from that day, Mr. Straddle, who honourably told Miss Jilks of his pecuniary difficulties and expectations, lost every dun, and cut the dons. He and Miss Vi were married at Cheltenham, where they still reside, and may be seen "welling it" every morning, arm-in-arm, followed by a large Newfoundland dog and a terrier, nearly as fat as their master and mistress; for, strange to say, the thin Miss Jilks is now the stout Mrs. Straddle, and even encourages her husband to smoke his cigar, while she sips her liqueur and water, and has been known to fumigate her room with a cigar

in his absence, instead of a pastil — by mistake, of course.

Master Byron Scott Montgomery did *not* get the Newdigate, or his first class, but was rusticated for going drunk to lecture, and went out to India to hide his shame. Rookington obligingly accompanied him, and eloped with his youngest sister soon after his arrival.

Timothy Thornback was enabled, by Straddle's generosity, to take the public he so much longed to get possession of, and over his little bar-table tells a great many stories about Oxford life in general, and his own adventures there in particular.

"There," said Mrs. P., when I had finished reading my MS. to her, Broome, and Dusterly, as they sat over a friendly dish of tea—a *tass doo tay*, as she calls it. "If I was you, Peter, I'd stop at that *mettay fang à voter oovrarge*."

"'ow's that hin henglish, mum?" inquired Dusterly, anticipating a tart reply from my

wife. I undertook to explain that Mrs. P. was anxious I should cease publishing any more of my "life and times," as she was often alarmed at the risks I ran of being punished for what some people fancied were caricatures of themselves. Dr. Puffs had indeed commenced an action against me, and would have carried it on, if Podagra had not carried him off. Our Bursar, too, was requested by Chops, the barber, to look out for another shaver, unless he consented to expel me from the buttery; which it is possible he might have done, had not my attention to him, during a severe illness, brought on by eating too much lamprey, which old Explicator sent him from Worcester, softened his heart towards me. Several other gentlemen, too, who fancy that they are shown up, as Dick Downe, Tom Springer, little Rooke, *cum multis aliis*, look at me with suspicious glances, though they treat me civilly before my face, for fear I *should* paint their likenesses on paper. "Under all circumstances, my dear Mrs. P.," said I, "I think I shall yield to your request. It is pos-

sible that at some future period I may resume my pen, and, by writing *anonymously*, record a few of the numerous anecdotes of Oxford life with which my memory is stored, without subjecting you to constant uneasiness on my behalf, or myself to the inconveniences of the *digito monstrari*."

"*Say bong*," said Mrs. P., "and you won't go any more to that horrid Shirt and Shotbag?"

Peter.
Broome.
Dusterly.
{ "As long as Mr. Rakestraw lives, and bears away 'the Bell' from other publics, and presides as 'most noble grand' at the lodge of Odd Fellows, *we* must attend."

"*Mong dew!*" screamed Mrs. P., "*jong swee behangd fashy.*"

"Now, my dear, three glasses of grog," said I. "Broome and Dusterly, I'll give you a toast—bumpers, and no taps. Here's to the health of all *great* literary characters, from my Lord and my Lady down to the humble College Scout, and to all spirited Publishers and Editors, and, as the phrase goes, 'may a liberal and discern-

ing public appreciate and reward their exertions.' "

Omnes. " Hip, hip, hip, hurrah! — guggle, guggle, guggle! — rap, rap, rap! — one cheer more! — hurra! a-a-a-a-ah!!!"

THE END.

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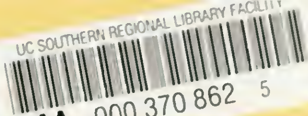
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