

Sketches — Volume 05 eBook

Sketches — Volume 05

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CHAPTER I.—Introductory.

“Let the neighbors smell we have something respectable for once.”

There is certainly no style of writing requiring so much modest assurance as autobiography; a position which, I am confident, neither Lord Cherbury, nor Vidocq, or any other mortal blessed with an equal developement of the organ of self-esteem, can or could deny.

Home, (“sweet home,”)—in his *Douglas*—gives, perhaps, one of the most concise and concentrated specimens extant, of this species of composition. With what an imposing air does his youthful hero blow his own trumpet in those well-known lines, commencing,

“My name is Norval.”

Although a mere cock-boat in comparison with these first-rates, I think I may safely follow in their wake. Should the critics, however, condescend to carp at me for likening myself to a cock-boat, I have no objection, if by a twist of their ingenuity, they can prove me to be a little funny!

Economy was one of the most prominent characteristics of the family from which I sprang. Now, some authors would weary their indulgent readers with a flatulent chapter upon the moral beauty of this virtue; but as my first wish is to win favor by my candor, I must honestly confess, that necessity was the parent of this lean attenuated offspring!—For, alas!

My ‘angel mother,’ (as Anna Maria phrases it,) was a woman of ten thousand, for she dwelt in one of the most populous districts of London! My sire, was of the most noble order of St. Crispin; and though he had many faults, was continually mending—being the most eminent cobbler in the neighbourhood.

Even in the outset of their connubial partnership, they started under the most favorable auspices—for, whereas other couples marry for love or money, they got married for ‘nothing’ taking advantage of the annual gratuitous splicings performed at Shoreditch Church on one sunshiny Easter Monday.

In less than three years my amiable mother presented her lord and master with as many interesting pledges of their affection—I was the cobbler’s last—and

‘Though last, not least, in their dear love.’

CHAPTER II.—Our Lodging.

Our precarious means were too small to permit us to rent a house, we therefore rented one large room, which served us for—

“Parlor and kitchen and all!”

in the uppermost story of a house, containing about a dozen families.

This ‘airy’ apartment was situated in a narrow alley of great thoroughfare, in the heart of the great metropolis.

The lower part of this domicile was occupied by one James, who did ‘porter’s work,’ while his wife superintended the trade of a miscellaneous store, called a green-grocer’s; although the stock comprised, besides a respectable skew of cabbages, carrots, lettuces, and other things in season, a barrel of small beer, a side of bacon, a few red herrings, a black looking can of ‘new milk,’ and those less perishable articles, Warren’s blacking, and Flanders’ bricks; while the window was graced with a few samples of common confectionary, celebrated under the sweet names of lollypops, Buonaparte’s ribs, and bulls’-eyes.

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In one pane, by permission, was placed the sign board of my honored parent, informing the reading public, that

‘Repairs were neatly executed!’

In my mind’s eye how distinctly do I behold that humble shop in all the greenness and beauty of its Saturday morning’s display.

Nor can I ever forget the kind dumpy motherly Mrs. James, who so often patted my curly head, and presented me with a welcome slice of bread and butter and a drink of milk, invariably repeating in her homely phrase, “a child and a chicken is al’ays a pickin’”—and declaring her belief, that the ‘brat’ got scarcely enough to “keep life and soul together”—the real truth of which my craving stomach inwardly testified.

Talk of the charities of the wealthy, they are as ‘airy nothings’ in the scale, compared with the unostentatious sympathy of the poor! The former only give a portion of their excess, while the latter willingly divide their humble crust with a fellow sufferer.

The agreeable routine of breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper, was unknown in our frugal establishment; if we obtained one good meal a day, under any name, we were truly thankful.

To give some idea of our straitened circumstances, I must relate one solitary instance of display on the maternal side. It was on a Saturday night, the air and our appetites were equally keen, when my sire, having unexpectedly touched a small sum, brought home a couple of pound of real Epping. A scream of delight welcomed the savory morsel.

A fire was kindled, and the meat was presently hissing in the borrowed frying-pan of our landlady.

I was already in bed, when the unusual sound and savor awoke me. I rolled out in a twinkling, and squatting on the floor, watched the culinary operations with greedy eyes.

“Tom,” said my mother, addressing her spouse, “set open the door and vinder, and let the neighbors smell ve has something respectable for once.”

Chapter. III.—On Temperance.

“I wou’dn’t like to shoot her exactly; but I’ve a blessed mind to turn her out!”

Armed with the authority and example of loyalty, for even that renowned monarch—Old King Cole—was diurnally want to call for

“His pipe and his glass”

and induced by the poetical strains of many a bard, from the classic Anacreon to those of more modern times, who have celebrated the virtue of

“Wine, mighty wine!”

it is not to be marvelled at, that men’s minds have fallen victims to the fascinations of the juice of the purple grape, or yielded to the alluring temptations of the ‘evil spirit.’

It is a lamentable truth, that notwithstanding the laudable and wholesome exertions and admonitions of the Temperance and Tee-total Societies, that the people of the United Kingdom are grievously addicted to an excessive imbibation of spirituous liquors, cordials, and compounds.

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Although six-bottle men are now regarded as monstrosities, and drinking parties are nearly exploded, tippling and dram-drinking among the lower orders are perhaps more indulged in than ever.

The gilded and gorgeous temples—devoted to the worship of the reeling-goddess *Geneva*—blaze forth in every quarter of the vast metropolis.

Is it matter of wonder, then, that while men of superior intellect and education are still weak enough to seek excitement in vinous potations, that the vulgar, poor, and destitute, should endeavour to drown their sorrows by swallowing the liquid fires displayed under various names, by the wily priests of Silenus!

That such a deduction is illogical we are well aware, but great examples are plausible excuses to little minds.

Both my parents were naturally inclined to sobriety; but, unfortunately, and as it too frequently happens, in low and crowded neighbourhoods, drunkenness is as contagious as the small-pox, or any other destructive malady.

Now, it chanced that in the first-floor of the house in which we dwelt, there also resided one Stubbs and his wife. They had neither chick nor child. Stubbs was a tailor by trade, and being a first-rate workman, earned weekly a considerable sum; but, like too many of his fraternity, he was seldom sober from Saturday night until Wednesday morning. His loving spouse 'rowed in the same boat'—and the 'little green-bottle' was dispatched several times during the days of their Saturnalia, to be replenished at the never-failing fountain of the 'Shepherd and Flock.'

Unhappily, in one of her maudlin fits, Mrs. Stubbs took a particular fancy to my mother; and one day, in the absence of the 'ninth,' beckoned my unsuspecting parent into her sittingroom,—and after gratuitously imparting to her the hum-drum history of her domestic squabbles, invited her to take a 'drop o' summat'—to keep up her I sperrits.'

Alas! this was the first step—and she went on, and on, and on, until that which at first she loathed became no longer disagreeable, and by degrees grew into a craving that was irresistible;—and, at last, she regularly hob-and-nobb'd' with the disconsolate rib of Stubbs, and shared alike in all her troubles and her liquor.

Fain would I draw a veil over this frailty of my unfortunate parent; but, being conscious that veracity is the very soul and essence of history, I feel myself imperatively called upon neither to disguise nor to cancel the truth.

My father remonstrated in vain—the passion had already taken too deep a hold; and one day he was suddenly summoned from his work with the startling information, that

'Mother Mullins'—(so the kind neighbour phrased it) was sitting on the step of a public house, in the suburbs, completely 'tosticated.'

He rushed out, and found the tale too true. A bricklayer in the neighbourhood proposed the loan of his barrow, for the poor senseless creature could not walk a step. Placing her in the one-wheel-carriage, he made the best of his way home, amid the jeers of the multitude. Moorfields was then only partially covered with houses; and as he passed a deep hollow, on the side of which was placed a notice, intimating that



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"Rubbish may be shot here!"

his eyes caught the words, and in the bitterness of his heart he exclaimed—

"I wou'dn't like to shoot her exactly; but I've a blessed mind to turn her out!"

CHAPTER IV.—A Situation.

"I say, Jim, what birds are we most like now?" "Why swallows, to be sure,"

In the vicinity of our alley were numerous horse-rides, and my chief delight was being entrusted with a horse, and galloping up and down the straw-littered avenue.—I was about twelve years of age, and what was termed a sharp lad, and I soon became a great favourite with the ostlers, who admired the aptness with which I acquired the language of the stables.

There were many stock-brokers who put up at the ride; among others was Mr. Timmis—familiarily called long Jim Timmis. He was a bold, dashing, good-humoured, vulgar man, who was quite at home with the ostlers, generally conversing with them in their favourite lingo.

I had frequent opportunities of shewing him civilities, handing him his whip, and holding his stirrup, *etc.*

One day he came to the ride in a most amiable and condescending humour, and for the first time deigned to address me—"Whose kid are you?" demanded he.

"Father's, sir," I replied.

"Do you know your father, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"A wise child this;" and he winked at the ostler, who, of course, laughed incontinently.

"I want a-lad," continued he; "what do you say—would you like to serve me?"

"If I could get any thing by it."

"D-me, if that a'int blunt."

"Yes, sir; that's what I mean."

"Mean! mean what?"

"If I could get any blunt, sir."

Hereupon he laughed outright, at what he considered my readiness, although I merely used the cant term for "money," to which I was most accustomed, from my education among the schoolmasters of the ride.

"Here, take my card," said he; "and tell the old codger, your father, to bring you to my office to-morrow morning, at eleven."

"Well, blow me," exclaimed my friend the ostler, "if your fortin' arn't made; I shall see you a tip-top sawyer—may I never touch another tanner! Vy, I remembers Jim Timmis hisself vos nothin but a grubby boy—Mother Timmis the washer-woman's son, here in what-d've-call-'em-court—ven he vent to old Jarvis fust. He's a prime feller tho', and no mistake—and thof he's no gentleman born, he pays like one, and vot's the difference?"

The next morning, punctual to the hour, I waited at his office, which was in a large building adjoining the Stock Exchange, as full as a dove-cot, with gentlemen of the same feather.

"O!" said he, eyeing my parent, "and you're this chap's father, are you? What are you?"

"A boot and shoe-maker, sir; and my Andrew is an honest lad."

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“For the matter o’ that, there’s little he can prig here;” replied my elegant and intended master. “But his tongs—eh—old fellow—can’t you rig him out a little?”

My father pleaded poverty; and at last he bargained to advance a guinea, and deduct it out of my weekly-wages of two and sixpence, and no board. My father was glad to make any terms, and the affair was consequently soon arranged. I was quickly fitted out, and the next morning attended his orders.

I had, however, little else to do than wait in his office, and run to the Stock Exchange, to summon him when a customer dropped in. I had much leisure, which I trust was not wholly thrown away, for I practised writing on the back of the stock-receipts, of which a quantity hung up in the office, and read all the books I could lay my hands on; although, I must confess, the chief portion of my knowledge of the world has been derived from observation.

“The proper study of mankind is man.”

Although quick in temper, and rude in speech and manners, Timmis was kind; and, if he had a failing, it was the ambition of being a patron; and he was certainly not one of those who do a good deed, and

“Blush to find it fame.”

He not only employed my father to make his boots, but recommended him to all his friends as a “good-fit,” and procured the old man some excellent customers. Among his acquaintance, for he had few friends, was Tom Wallis, a fat, facetious man, about forty, with whom he was always lunching and cracking his jokes. One day, when the stocks were “shut” and business was slack, they started together on a sporting excursion towards the romantic region of Hornsey-wood, on which occasion I had the honour of carrying a well-filled basket of provisions, and the inward satisfaction of making a good dinner from the remnants.

They killed nothing but time, yet they were exceedingly merry, especially during the discussion of the provisions. Their laughter, indeed, was enough to scare all the birds in the neighbourhood.

“Jim, if you wanted to correct those sheep yonder,” said Tom, “what sort of tool would you use?”

“An ewe-twig, of course,” replied my master.

“No; that’s devilish good,” said Wallis; “but you ain’t hit it yet.”

“For a crown you don’t do a better?”

“Done!”

“Well, what is it?”

“Why, a Ram-rod to be sure—as we’re sportsmen.”

My master agreed that it was more appropriate, and the good-natured Tom Wallis flung the crown he had won to me.

“Here’s another,” continued he, as Mr. Timmis was just raising a bottle of pale sherry to his lips—“I say, Jim, what birds are we most like now?”

“Why swallows, to be sure,” quickly replied my patron; who was really, on most occasions, a match for his croney in the sublime art of punning, and making conundrums, a favourite pastime with the wits of the Stock Exchange.

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CHAPTER V.—The Stalking Horse.

“Retributive Justice”

On the same landing where Timmis (as he termed it) ‘held out,’ were five or six closets nick-named offices, and three other boys. One was the nephew of the before-mentioned Wallis, and a very imp of mischief; another, only a boy, with nothing remarkable but his stupidity; while the fourth was a scrubby, stunted, fellow, about sixteen or seventeen years of age, with a long pale face, deeply pitted with the small-pox, and an irregular crop of light hair, most unscientifically cut into tufts.

He, by reason of his seniority and his gravity, soon became the oracle of the party. We usually found him seated on the stairs of the first floor, lost in the perusal of some ragged book of the marvellous school—scraps of which he used to read aloud to us, with more unction than propriety, indulging rather too much in the note of admiration style; for which he soon obtained the name of Old Emphatic!—But I must confess we did obtain a great deal of information from his select reading, and were tolerably good listeners too, notwithstanding his peculiar delivery, for somehow he appeared to have a permanent cold in his head, which sometimes threw a tone of irresistible ridicule into his most pathetic bits.

He bore the scriptural name of Matthew and was, as he informed us, a ‘h orphan’—adding, with a particular pathos, ‘without father or mother!’ His melancholy was, I think, rather attributable to bile than destitution, which he superinduced by feeding almost entirely on ‘second-hand pastry,’ purchased from the little Jew-boys, who hawk about their ‘tempting’ trash in the vicinity of the Bank.

Matthew, like other youths of a poetical temperament, from Petrarch down to Lord Byron, had a ‘passion.’

I accidentally discovered the object of his platonic flame in the person of the little grubby-girl—the servant of the house-keeper—for, as the proverb truly says,

“Love and a cough cannot be hid.”

The tender passion first evinced itself in his delicate attentions;—nor was the quick-eyed maid slow to discover her conquest. Her penetration, however, was greater than her sympathy. With a tact that would not have disgraced a politician—in a better cause, she adroitly turned the swelling current of his love to her own purposes.

As the onward flowing stream is made to turn the wheel, while the miller sings at the window, so did she avail herself of his strength to do her work, while she gaily hummed a time, and sadly ‘hummed’ poor Matthew.

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There being nearly thirty offices in the building, there were of course in winter as many fires, and as many coal-scuttles required. When the eyes of the devoted Matthew gazed on the object of his heart's desire toiling up the well-stair, he felt he knew not what; and, with a heart palpitating with the apprehension that his proffered service might be rejected (poor deluded mortal!), he begged he might assist her. With a glance that he thought sufficient to ignite the insensible carbon, she accepted his offer. Happy Matthew!—he grasped the handles her warm red-hands had touched!—Cold-blooded, unimaginative beings may deride his enthusiasm; but after all, the sentiment he experienced was similar to, and quite as pure, as that of Tom Jones, when he fondled Sophia Western's little muff.

But, alas!—

“The course of true love never did run smooth.”

Two months after this event, ‘his Mary’ married the baker’s man!—

* * * * *

Wallis's nephew had several times invited me to pay him a visit at his uncle's house, at Crouchend; and so once, during the absence of that gentleman who was ruralizing at Tonbridge, I trudged down to his villa.

Nothing would suit Master John, but that he must ‘have out’ his uncle's gun; and we certainly shot at, and frightened, many sparrows.

He was just pointing at a fresh quarry, when the loud crow of a cock arrested his arm.

“That's Doddington's game ‘un, I know,” said Master John. “What d'ye think—if he did'nt ‘pitch into’ our ‘dunghill’ the other day, and laid him dead at a blow. I owe him one!—Come along.” I followed in his footsteps, and soon beheld Chanticleer crowing with all the ostentation of a victor at the hens he had so ruthlessly widowed. A clothes-horse, with a ragged blanket, screened us from his view; and Master John, putting the muzzle of his gun through a hole in this novel ambushade, discharged its contents point blank into the proclaimer of the morn—and laid him low.

I trembled; for I felt that we had committed a ‘foul murder.’ Master Johnny, however, derided my fears—called it retributive justice—and ignominiously consigned the remains of a game-cock to a dunghill!

The affair appeared so like a cowardly assassination, in which I was (though unwillingly —) ‘particeps criminis’—that I walked away without partaking of the gooseberry-pie, which he had provided for our supper.



CHAPTER VI.—A Commission.

“Och! thin, Paddy, what’s the bothuration; if you carry me, don’t I carry the whiskey, sure, and that’s fair and aqual!”

I was early at my post on the following morning, being particularly anxious to meet with Mr. Wallis’s scapegrace nephew, and ascertain whether anybody had found the dead body of the game-cock, and whether an inquest had been held; for I knew enough of the world to draw my own conclusions as to the result. He, although the principal, being a relative, would get off with a lecture, while I should probably be kicked out of my place.

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In a fever of expectation, I hung over the banisters of the geometrical staircase, watching for his arrival.

While I was thus occupied, my nerves “screwed up,”—almost to cracking, Mr. Wallis’s office-door was thrown open, and I beheld that very gentleman’s round, pleasant physiognomy, embrowned by his travels, staring me full in the face. I really lost my equilibrium at the apparition.

“Oh!—it’s you, is it,” cried he. “Where’s my rascal?”

“He’s not come yet, sir,” I replied.

“That fellow’s never at hand when I want him--I’ll cashier him by ____.”
He slammed to his own door, and—opened it again immediately.

“Timmis come?” demanded he.

“No, sir; I don’t think he’ll be here for an hour.”

“True—I’m early in the field; but what brings you here so soon?—some mischief, I suppose.”

“I’m always early, sir, for I live hard by.”

“Ha!—well—I wish—.”

“Can I do anything for you, sir?” I enquired.

“Why, that’s a good thought,” said he, and his countenance assumed its usually bland expression. “Let me see—I want to send my carpet-bag, and a message, to my housekeeper.”

“I can do it, sir, and be back again in no time,” cried I, elated at having an opportunity of obliging the man whom I had really some cause to fear, in the critical situation in which his nephew’s thoughtlessness had placed me.

In my eagerness, however, and notwithstanding the political acuteness of my manoeuvre, I got myself into an awful dilemma. Having received the bag, and his message, I walked off, but had scarcely descended a dozen stairs when he recalled me.

“Where the devil are you going?” cried he.

“To your house, sir,” I innocently replied.

“What, do you know it, then?” demanded he in surprise.

Here was a position. It was a miracle that I did not roll over the carpet-bag and break my neck, in the confusion of ideas engendered by this simple query.

I could not lie, and evasion was not my forte. A man or boy in the wrong can never express himself with propriety; an opinion in which Quintilian also appears to coincide, when he asserts—

“Orator perfectus nisi vir bonus esse non potest.”

I therefore summoned up sufficient breath and courage to answer him in the affirmative.

“And when, pray, were you there?” said he.

“Yesterday, sir, your nephew asked me to come and see him.”

“The impudent little blackguard?” cried he.

“I hope you ain’t angry, sir?”

“Angry with you?—no, my lad; you’re an active little chap, and I wish that imp of mine would take a pattern by you. Trot along, and mind you have ‘a lift’ both ways.”

Off I went, as light as a balloon when the ropes are cut.

I executed my commission with dispatch, and completely won the favour of Mr. Wallis, by returning the money which he had given me for coach-hire.

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"How's this?—you didn't tramp, did you?" said he.

"No, sir, I rode both ways," I replied; "but I knew the coachmen, and they gave me a cast for nothing."

"Umph!—well, that's quite proper—quite proper," said he, considering a moment. "Honesty's the best policy."

"Father always told me so, sir."

"Your father's right;—there's half-a-crown for you."

I was delighted—

"Quantum cedat virtutibus aurum;"

and I felt the truth of this line of Dr. Johnson's, although I was then ignorant of it. I met his nephew on the landing, but my fears had vanished. We talked, however, of the departed bird, and he wished me, in the event of discovery, to declare that I had loaded and carried the gun, and that he would bear the rest of the blame.

This, however, strongly reminded me of the two Irish smugglers:—one had a wooden leg, and carried the cask; while his comrade, who had the use of both his pins, bore him upon his shoulders, and, complaining of the weight, the other replied:—"Och! thin, Paddy, what's the bothuration; if you carry me, don't I carry the whiskey, sure, and that's fair and aqual!" and I at once declined any such Hibernian partnership in the affair, quite resolved that he should bear the whole onus upon his own shoulders.

CHAPTER, VII.—The Cricket Match

"Out! so don't fatigue yourself, I beg, sir."

I soon discovered that my conduct had been reported in the most favourable colours to Mr. Timmis, and the consequence was that he began to take more notice of me.

"Andrew, what sort of a fist can you write?" demanded he. I shewed him some caligraphic specimens.

"D___ me, if your y's and your g's hav'nt tails like skippingropes. We must have a little topping and tailing here, and I think you'll do. Here, make out this account, and enter it in the book."

He left me to do his bidding; and when he returned from the Stock-Exchange, inspected the performance, which I had executed with perspiring ardour.

I watched his countenance. “That’ll do—you’re a brick! I’ll make a man of you--d___ me.”

From this day forward I had the honour of keeping his books, and making out the accounts. I was already a person of importance, and certainly some steps above the boys on the landing.

I did not, however, obtain any advance in my weekly wages; but on “good-days” got a *douceur*, varying from half a crown to half a sovereign! and looked upon myself as a made man. Most of the receipts went to my father; whatever he returned to me I spent at a neighbouring book-stall, and in the course of twelve months I possessed a library of most amusing and instructive literature,—Heaven knows! of a most miscellaneous character, for I had no one to guide me in the selection.

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Among Mr. Timmis's numerous clients, was one Mr. Cornelius Crobble, a man of most extraordinary dimensions; he was also a "chum" of, and frequently made one of a party with, his friend Mr. Wallis, and other croneys, to white-bait dinners at Blackwall, and other intellectual banquets. In fact, he seldom made his appearance at the office, but the visit ended in an engagement to dine at some "crack-house" or other. The cost of the "feed," as Mr. Timmis termed it, was generally decided by a toss of "best two and three;" and somehow it invariably happened that Mr. Crobble lost; but he was so good-humoured, that really it was a pleasure, as Mr. Wallis said, to "grub" at his expense.

They nick-named him Maximo Rotundo—and he well deserved the title.

"Where's Timmis?" said he, one day after he had taken a seat, and puffed and blowed for the space of five minutes—"Cuss them stairs; they'll be the death o' me."

I ran to summon my master.

"How are you, old fellow?" demanded Mr. Timmis; "tip us your fin."

"Queer!" replied Mr. Crobble,—tapping his breast gently with his fat fist, and puffing out his cheeks—to indicate that his lungs were disordered.

"What, bellows to mend?" cried my accomplished patron-- D___ me, never say die!"

"Just come from Doctor Sprawles: says I must take exercise; no malt liquor—nothing at breakfast—no lunch—no supper."

"Why, you'll be a skeleton—a transfer from the consolidated to the reduced in no time," exclaimed Mr. Timmis; and his friend joined in the laugh.

"I was a-thinking, Timmis—don't you belong to a cricketclub?"

"To be sure."

—"Of joining you."

"That's the ticket," cried Timmis—"consider yourself elected; I can carry any thing there. I'm quite the cock of the walk, and no mistake. Next Thursday's a field-day—I'll introduce you. Lord! you'll soon be right as a trivet."

Mr Wallis was summoned, and the affair was soon arranged; and I had the gratification of being present at Mr. Crobble's inauguration.



It was a broiling day, and there was a full field; but he conducted himself manfully, notwithstanding the jokes of the club. He batted exceedingly well, “considering,” as Mr. Wallis remarked; but as for the “runs,” he was completely at fault.

He only attempted it once; but before he had advanced a yard or two, the ball was caught; and the agile player, striking the wicket with ease, exclaimed, amid the laughter of the spectators—“Out! so don’t fatigue yourself, I beg, sir.”

And so the match was concluded, amid cheers and shouting, in which the rotund, good-natured novice joined most heartily.

CHAPTER VIII.—The Hunter.

“Hunting may be sport, says I, but I’m blest if its pleasure.”

Two days after the cricket-match, Mr. Crobble paid a visit to my master.

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“Well, old fellow, d___ me me, if you ain’t a trump--how’s your wind?”
—kindly enquired Mr. Timmis.

“Vastly better, thank’ye; how’s Wallis and the other fellows?—prime sport that cricketing.”

“Yes; but, I say, you’ll never have ‘a run’ of luck, if you stick to the wicket so.”

“True; but I made a hit or two, you must allow,” replied Mr. Crobble; “though I’m afraid I’m a sorry member.”

“A member, indeed!—no, no; you’re the body, and we’re the—members,” replied Mr. Timmis, laughing; “but, halloo! what’s that patch on your forehead—bin a fighting?”

“No; but I’ve been a hunting,” said Mr. Crobble, “and this here’s the fruits—You know my gray?”

“The nag you swopp’d the bay roadster for with Tom Brown?”

“Him,” answered Crobble. “Well, I took him to Hertfordshire Wednesday last—”

“He took you, you mean.”

“Well, what’s the odds?”

“The odds, why, in your favour, to be sure, as I dare say the horse can witness.”

“Well, howsomever, there was a good field—and off we went. The level country was all prime; but he took a hedge, and nearly julked all the life out o’ me. I lost my stirrup, and should have lost my seat, had’nt I clutched his mane—”

“And kept your seat by main force?”

“Very good.”

“Well, away we went, like Johnny Gilpin. Hunting may be sport, says I, but I’m blest if its pleasure. This infernal horse was always fond of shying, and now he’s going to shy me off; and, ecod! no sooner said than done. Over his head I go, like a rocket.”

“Like a foot-ball, you mean,” interrupted Mr. Timmis.

“And, as luck would have it, tumbles into a ditch, plump with my head agin the bank.”



“By jingo! such a ‘run’ upon the bank was enough to break it,” cried my master, whose propensity to crack a joke overcame all feeling of sympathy for his friend.

“It broke my head though; and warn’t I in a precious mess—that’s all—up to my neck, and no mistake—and black as a chimney-sweep—such mud!”

“And only think of a man of your property investing his substance in mud! That is a good ‘un!—Andrew,” said he, “tell Wally to come here.” I summoned his crony, and sat myself down to the books, to enjoy the sportive sallies of the two friends, who roasted the ‘fat buck,’ their loving companion, most unmercifully.

“You sly old badger,” cried Wallis, “why, you must have picked out the ditch.”

“No, but they picked out me, and a precious figure I cut—I can tell you—I was dripping from top to toe.”

“Very like dripping, indeed!” exclaimed Mr. Timmis, eyeing his fat friend, and bursting into an immoderate fit of laughter. The meeting ended, as usual, with a bet for a dinner at the “Plough” for themselves and their friends, which Mr. Crobble lost—as usual.

CHAPTER IX.—A Row to Blackwall.

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'To be sold, warranted sound, a gray-mare, very fast, and carries a lady; likewise a bay-cob, quiet to ride or drive, and has carried a lady'

Steam-boats did not run to Greenwich and Blackwall at this period; and those who resorted to the white-bait establishments at those places, either availed themselves of a coach or a boat. Being now transformed, by a little personal merit, and a great favour, from a full-grown errand-boy to a small clerk, Mr. Timmis, at the suggestion of my good friend Mr. Wallis, offered me, as a treat, a row in the boat they had engaged for the occasion; which, as a matter of course, I did not refuse: making myself as spruce as my limited wardrobe would permit, I trotted at their heels to the foot of London-bridge, the point of embarkation.

The party, including the boatman, consisted of eight souls; the tide was in our favour, and away we went, as merry a company as ever floated on the bosom of Father Thames. Mr. Crobble was the chief mark for all their sallies, and indeed he really appeared, from his size, to have been intended by Nature for a "butt," as Mr. Wallis wickedly remarked.

"You told, me, Crobble, of your hunting exploit in Hertfordshire," said Mr. Wallis; "I'll tell you something as bangs that hollow; I'm sure I thought I should have split with laughter when I heard of it. You know the old frump, my Aunt Betty, Timmis?"

"To be sure—she with the ten thousand in the threes," replied Mr. Timmis; "a worthy creature; and I'm sure you admire her principal."

"Don't I," cried Wallis; and he winked significantly at his friend.

"Well, what d'ye think; she, and Miss Scragg, her toady, were in the country t'other day, and must needs amuse themselves in an airing upon a couple of prads.

"Well; they were cantering along—doing the handsome—and had just come to the border of a pond, when a donkey pops his innocent nose over a fence in their rear, and began to heehaw' in a most melodious strain. The nags pricked up their ears in a twinkling, and made no more ado but bolted. Poor aunty tugged! but all in vain; her bay-cob ran into the water; and she lost both her presence of mind and her seat, and plumped swash into the pond—her riding habit spreading out into a beautiful circle—while she lay squalling and bawling out in the centre, like a little piece of beef in the middle of a large batter-pudding! Miss Scragg, meanwhile, stuck to her graymare, and went bumping along to the admiration of all beholders, and was soon out of sight: luckily a joskin, who witnessed my dear aunt's immersion, ran to her assistance, and, with the help of his pitch-fork, safely landed her; for unfortunately the pond was not above three or four feet deep! and so she missed the chance of being an angel!"

"And you the transfer of her threes!—what a pity!" said the sympathizing Mr. Timmis.

“When I heard of the accident, of course, as in duty bound, I wrote an anxious letter of affectionate enquiry and condolence. At the same period, seeing an advertisement in the Times—’To be sold, warranted sound, a gray-mare, very fast, and carries a lady; likewise a bay-cob, quiet to ride or drive, and has carried a lady’—I was so tickled with the co-incidence, that I cut it out, and sent it to her in an envelope.”

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"Prime! by Jove!"—shouted Mr. Crobble—"But, I say, Wallis—you should have sent her a 'duck' too, as a symbolical memorial of her accident!"

CHAPTER X.—The Pic-Nic.

—had just spread out their prog on a clean table-cloth, when they were alarmed by the approach of a cow.

"People should never undertake to do a thing they don't perfectly understand," remarked Mr. Crobble, "they're sure to make fools o' themselves in the end. There's Tom Davis, (you know Tom Davis?) he's always putting his notions into people's heads, and turning the laugh against 'em. If there's a ditch in the way, he's sure to dare some of his companions to leap it, before he overs it himself; if he finds it safe, away he springs like a greyhound."

"Exactly him, I know him," replied Mr. Timmis; "that's what he calls learning to shave upon other people's chins!"

"Excellent!" exclaimed Mr. Wallis.

"He's a very devil," continued Mr. Crobble; "always proposing some fun or other: Pic-nics are his delight; but he always leaves others to bring the grub, and brings nothing but himself. I hate Pic-nics, squatting in the grass don't suit me at all; when once down, I find it no easy matter to get up again, I can tell you."

Hereupon there was a general laugh.

"Talking of Pic-nics," said Mr. Timmis. "reminds me of one that was held the other day in a meadow, on the banks of the Lea. The party, consisting of ladies only, and a little boy, had just spread out their prog on a clean table-cloth, when they were alarmed by the approach of a cow. They were presently on their pins, (cow'd, of course,) and sheered off to a respectful distance, while the cow walked leisurely over the table-cloth, smelling the materials of the feast, and popp'd her cloven foot plump into a currant and raspberry pie! and they had a precious deal of trouble to draw her off; for, as Tom Davis said, there were some veal-patties there, which were, no doubt, made out of one of her calves; and in her maternal solicitude, she completely demolished the plates and dishes, leaving the affrighted party nothing more than the broken victuals."

"What a lark!" exclaimed Mr. Crobble; "I would have given a guinea to have witnessed the fun. That cow was a trojan!"

"A star in the milky way," cried Mr. Wallis.

We now approached the 'Plough;' and Mr. Crobble having 'satisfied' the boatman, Mr. Wallis gave me half-a-crown, and bade me make the best of my way home. I pocketed the money, and resolved to 'go on the highway,' and trudge on foot.

"Andrew," said my worthy patron, "now don't go and make a beast of yourself, but walk straight home."

"Andrew," said Mr. Wallis, imitating his friend's tone of admonition; "if any body asks you to treat 'em, bolt; if any body offers to treat you, retreat!"

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“Andrew,” said Mr. Crobble, who was determined to put in his oar, and row in the same boat as his friends; “Andrew,”—“Yes, Sir;” and I touched my hat with due respect, while his two friends bent forward to catch his words. “Andrew,” repeated he, for the third time, “avoid evil communication, and get thee gone from Blackwall, as fast as your legs can carry you—for, there’s villainous bad company just landed here—wicked enough to spoil even the immaculate Mr. Cornelius Crobble!”

CHAPTER XI.—The Journey Home.

“Starboard, Tom, starboard!”—“Aye, aye-starboard it is!”

I found myself quite in a strange land upon parting with my master and his friends. It was war-time, and the place was literally swarming with jack-tars.

Taking to the road, for the footway was quite crowded, I soon reached Poplar. Here a large mob impeded my progress. They appeared all moved with extraordinary merriment. I soon distinguished the objects of their mirth. Two sailors, mounted back to back on a cart-horse, were steering for Blackwall. A large horse-cloth served them as a substitute for a saddle, and the merry fellow behind held the reins; he was smoking a short pipe, while his mate was making an observation with his spy-glass.

“Starboard, Tom, starboard!” cried the one in front.

“Aye, aye-starboard it is!” replied his companion, tugging at the rein.

“Holloo, messmate! where are you bound?” bawled a sailor in the crowd.

“To the port o’ Blackwall,” replied the steersman. “But we’re going quite in the wind’s eye, and I’m afeared we shan’t make it to-night.”

“A queer craft.”

“Werry,” replied Tom. “Don’t answer the helm at all.”

“Any grog on board?” demanded the sailor.

“Not enough to wet the boatswain’s whistle; for, da’e see, mate, there’s no room for stowage.”

“Shiver my timbers!—no grog!” exclaimed the other; “why—you’ll founder. If you don’t splice the main-brace, you’ll not make a knot an hour. Heave to—and let’s drink success to the voyage.”

“With all my heart, mate, for I’m precious krank with tacking. Larboard, Tom—larboard.”

“Aye, aye—larboard it is.”

“Now, run her right into that ’ere spirit-shop to leeward, and let’s have a bowl.”

Tom tugged away, and soon “brought up” at the door of a wine-vaults.

“Let go the anchor,” exclaimed his messmate—“that’s it—coil up.”

“Here, mate—here’s a picter of his royal majesty”—giving the sailor alongside a new guinea—“and now tell the steward to mix us a jorum as stiff as a nor’wester, and, let’s all drink the King’s health—God bless him.”

“Hooray!” shouted the delighted mob.

Their quondam friend soon did his bidding, bringing out a huge china-bowl filled with grog, which was handed round to every soul within reach, and presently dispatched;—two others followed, before they “weighed anchor and proceeded on their voyage,” cheered by the ragged multitude, among whom they lavishly scattered their change; and a most riotous and ridiculous scramble it produced.

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I was much pleased with the novelty of the scene, and escaped from the crowd as quickly as I conveniently could, for I was rather apprehensive of an attempt upon my pockets.

What strange beings are these sailors! They have no care for the morrow, but spend lavishly the hard-earned wages of their adventurous life. To one like myself, who early knew the value of money, this thoughtless extravagance certainly appeared unaccountable, and nearly allied to madness; but, when I reflected that they are sometimes imprisoned in a ship for years, without touching land, and frequently in peril of losing their lives—that they have scarcely time to scatter their wages and prize-money in the short intervals which chance offers them of mixing with their fellow-men, my wonder changed to pity.

“A man in a ship,” says Dr. Johnson, “is worse than a man in a jail; for the latter has more room, better food, and commonly better company, and is in safety.”

CHAPTER XII.—Monsieur Dubois.

“I sha’nt fight with fistesses, it’s vulgar!—but if he’s a mind to anything like a gemman, here’s my card!”

The love-lorn Matthew had departed, no doubt unable to bear the sight of that staircase whose boards no longer resounded with the slip-slap of the slippers of that hypocritical beauty, “his Mary.” With him, the romance of the landing-place, and the squad, had evaporated; and I had no sympathies, no pursuits, in common with the remaining “boys”—my newly-acquired post, too, nearly occupied the whole of my time, while my desire of study increased with the acquisition of books, in which all my pocket-money was expended.

One day, my good friend, Mr. Wallis, entered the office, followed by a short, sharp-visaged man, with a sallow complexion; he was dressed in a shabby frock, buttoned up to the throat—a rusty black silk neckerchief supplying the place of shirt and collar.

He stood just within the threshold of the door, holding his napless hat in his hand.

“Well, Wally, my buck,” cried my master, extending his hand.

Mr. Wallis advanced close to his elbow, and spoke in a whisper; but I observed, by the direction of his eyes, that the subject of his communication was the stranger.

“Ha!” said Mr. Timmis, “it’s all very well, Walley—but I hate all forriners;—why don’t he go back to Frogland, and not come here, palming himself upon us. It’s no go—not a scuddick. They’re all a parcel o’ humbugs—and no mistake!”

As he uttered this gracious opinion sufficiently loud to strike upon the tympanum of the poor fellow at the door, I could perceive his dark eyes glisten, and the blood tinge his woe-begone cheeks; his lips trembled with emotion: there was an evident struggle between offended gentility, and urgent necessity.

Pride, however, gained the mastery; and advancing the right foot, he raised his hat, and with peculiar grace bowing to the two friends—"Pardon, Monsieur Vallis," said he, in tremulous accents, "I am 'de trop;' permit, me to visdraw"—and instantly left the office.

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Mr. Timmis, startled by his sudden exit, looked at Mr. Wallis for an explanation.

“By ___!” exclaimed Mr. Wallis seriously-- “you’ve hurt that poor fellow’s feelings. I would sooner have given a guinea than he should have heard you. Dubois is a gentleman; and altho’ he’s completely ‘stumped,’ and has’nt a place to put his head in, he’s tenacious of that respect which is due to every man, whether he happens to be at a premium, or a discount.”

“Go it!” cried Mr. Timmis, colouring deeply at this merited reproof—“If this ain’t a reg’lar sermon! I didn’t mean to hurt his feelings, d___ me; I’m a reg’lar John Bull, and he should know better than to be popped at my bluntness. D___ me, I wouldn’t hurt a worm--you know I wouldn’t, Wallis.”

There was a tone of contrition in this rambling apology that satisfied Mr. Wallis of its truth; and he immediately entered into an explanation on the Frenchman’s situation. He had known him, he said, for several years as a tutor in the family of one of his clients, by whom he was much respected: a heavy loss had compelled them suddenly to reduce their establishment; Dubois had entreated to remain with his pupil—refused to receive any salary—and had even served his old patron in the capacity of a menial, adhering to him in all his misfortunes, and only parted with him, reluctantly, at the door of the debtor’s prison!

“Did he do that?” said my master; and I saw his eyes moisten at the relation. “A French mounseer do that! Game--d___ me!”--and lifting the lid of his desk, he drew out a five pound note! “Here, Wallis, tip him this flimsey! Tell him—you know what to say—I’m no speechifier—but you know what I mean.” I almost jumped up and hugged my master, I was so excited.

The next day Monsieur Dubois again made his appearance; and Mr. Wallis had the pleasure of beholding Mr. Timmis and his gallic friend on the best terms imaginable.

As for me, I had good cause to rejoice; for it was agreed that I should take lessons in the “foreign lingo,” by way of giving him “a lift,” as Mr. Timmis expressed it. I remember him with feelings of gratitude; for I owe much more than the knowledge of the language to his kindness and instruction.

As for Mr. Timmis, he could never sufficiently appreciate his worth, although he uniformly treated him with kindness.

“Talk of refinement,” said he, one day, when discussing Dubois’ merits with Mr. Wallis; “I saw a bit to-day as bangs everything. A cadger sweeping a crossing fell out with a dustman. Wasn’t there some spicy jaw betwixt ’em. Well, nothing would suit, but the dustman must have a go, and pitch into the cadger.

“D___ me, what does the cove do, but he outs with a bit of dirty pasteboard, and he says, says he, “I sha’nt fight with fistesses, it’s vulgar!—but if he’s a mind to anything like a gemman, here’s my card!” Wasn’t there a roar! I lugg’d out a bob, and flung it at the vagabond for his wit.”

CHAPTER XIII.—My Talent Called into Active Service.

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“Ar’n’t you glad you ain’t a black-a-moor?”

“I should think so,” replied his sooty brother, “they’re sich ugly warmints.”

Having to deliver a letter, containing an account and a stock receipt, to one of Mr. Timmis’s clients, residing at the west end of the town; in crossing through one of the fashionable squares, I observed a flat-faced negro servant in livery, standing at the door of one of the houses.

Two chimney sweepers who happened to be passing, showed their white teeth in a contemptuous grin at the African.

“Bob,” I overheard one remark, “ar’n’t you glad you ain’t a black-a-moor?”

“I should think so,” replied his sooty brother, “they’re sich ugly warmints. Master’s daughter, wots come from boarding school! says the sight of ‘ems’ enough to frighten one into convulsions!”

Alas! for the prejudice of the world! How much this ignorant remark reminded me of my patron’s unfounded hatred of all “forriners.” It was precisely the same sentiment, differently expressed, that actuated the thoughts and opinions of both.

I must, however, do Mr. Timmis the justice to say, that he made ample amends to Monsieur Dubois for the affront he had so thoughtlessly put upon the worthy Frenchman; and did all in his power to obtain him pupils.

The consequent change in his dress and manner, his amiable conduct, and gentlemanly deportment, at last completely won upon the esteem of the boisterous broker, who swore, (for that was generally his elegant manner of expressing his sincerity) that Dubois was a ‘downright good’un;’ and were it not for his foreign accent, he should have taken him for an Englishman born—really believing, that there was no virtue in the world but of English growth.

I had now been above twelve-months in his office, and although I had received but a moderate compensation for my services, yet the vast improvement I had made (thanks to the instruction of Monsieur Dubois,) was more valuable than gold. My father also, though but scantily furnished with book-knowledge, had, nevertheless, the good sense to appreciate and encourage my progress; he was well aware, from observation, that ‘knowledge is power,’ and would frequently quote the old saw,

“When house, and land, and money’s spent;
Then larning is most excellent”—

and spared all the money he could scrape together to purchase books for me.

One day Mr. Crobble came into the office with an open letter in his hand. “Here,”—cried he, “I’ve received a remittance at last from that, German fellow—two good bills on the first house in the city—but I can’t make top nor tail of his rigmarole. Do you know any chap among your acquaintance who can read German?”

“Not I,” replied Mr. Timmis.

“Will you allow me, Mr. Crobble?” said I, stepping forward. “This letter is written in French, not German, Sir,” I observed.

“What’s the difference to me, Master Andrew; it might as well be in wild Irish, for the matter o’ that.”

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“Andrew can read the lingo,” said my master.

“The devil he can!” exclaimed Mr. Crobble; “I dare say I shall be able to make it out,” said I; “and if not, Monsieur Dubois will be here; to-morrow morning, and you can have it by twelve o’clock, sir.”

“Ain’t that the ticket?” exclaimed Mr. Timmis, delighted at the surprise of his friend; “you don’t know how vastly clever we are, old fellow.”

Mr. Crobble, much gratified at this information, placed the letter in my hands; and, leaving me to take a lunch at Garraway’s with Mr. Timmis, I eagerly sat about my task—and luckily it was not only plainly written, but the subject-matter by no means difficult, being rather complimentary than technical. By the time they returned, I had not only translated, but made a fair copy of it, in my best hand.

“Come, that is clever,” said Mr. Crobble; “let me see, now, what shall I give you?”

“Nothing, Sir,” I promptly replied; “I am Mr. Timmis’s clerk—and all that I know I owe to his kindness.”

I saw, with pleasure, that this compliment was not lost upon my master.

Mr. Crobble was really a gentleman in feeling, and therefore did not persist in offering me any remuneration; but as he left the office, he said, “I thank you, Mr. Andrew—I shall not forget your services;” and departed evidently much pleased with my performance.

CHAPTER XIV.—A Dilemma.

“Ee cawnt gow back, ’cause they locks the gates,”

“Well, can we go forward, then?”—“Noa, ee cawnt, ’cause the roads are under water;”

“Ee cawnt gow back, ’cause they locks the gates,” said a bumpkin on the road-side to a Cockney-party in a one-horse chaise.

“Well, can we go forward, then?” demanded the anxious and wearied traveller.

“Noa, ee cawnt, ’cause the roads are under water;” replied the joskin, with a grin.

This was certainly a situation more ridiculous than interesting; and I smiled when I heard the story told, little suspecting that Fortune would one day throw me into a similar dilemina—so blindly do we mortals hug ourselves in the supposed security of our tact and foresight.

“How d’ye do, Mr. Andrew,” said Mr. Crobble, when he had seated himself, and sufficiently inflated his lungs, after the fatiguing operation of mounting the stairs.

“Where’s Timmis?—tell him I want a word with him.”

I quickly summoned my patron, and followed him into the office.

“Well, old puff and blow!” exclaimed Mr. Timmis, with his usual familiarity.

“What’s in the wind? Want to sell out? The fives are fallen three per cent. since Friday. All the ‘Change is as busy as the devil in a high wind.”

“No—no more dabbling, Timmis,” replied Mr. Crobble; “I lost a cool hundred last account; I want a word in private with you”—and he glanced towards me; upon which I seized my hat, and took up my position at my old post on the landing. How were my feelings altered since I first loitered there, listening to the marvels of poor Matthew!

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I was lost in a pleasant reverie, when the sharp voice of Mr. Timmis recalled me.

“Andrew,” said he, “my friend Crobble wants a clerk, and has cast his eye upon you. What do you say?”

I scarcely knew what to say. On one side stood my master, to whom I really owed so much—on the other his friend, who offered me a promotion, which I felt, on many accounts, was most attractive. “I should have no objection,” I replied, “but great pleasure in serving Mr. Crobble, sir—but—I have received so many favours from you, that I’m afraid I might seem ungrateful.”

The good-natured Mr. Wallis happily stepped in at this moment to my relief.

“Nonsense,” replied Mr. Timmis; “the stock is delivered to the highest bidder; here Crobble backs eighteen shillings a week against my half-a-crown-take him.”

I still felt some hesitation, although it was evident, from his expression, that Mr. Timmis valued the servant much less than the servant valued the master.

“Only look here, Wally,” cried he; “here stands Andrew, like an ass between two bundles of hay.”

“Rather like a bundle of hay between two asses, I think,” replied Mr. Wallis; and good-naturedly tapping me on the shoulder, he continued—“accept Mr. Crobble’s offer, Master Andrew: you’re much too good for Timmis—he can soon get a grubby half-crown boy—but you may wait a long time for such an eligible offer.”

“Eighteen shillings a week,” said Mr. Crobble; who, I must confess, without any particular stretch of self-esteem, appeared anxious to engage me—, “but I shall want security.”

That word “security” fell like an avalanche on my mounting spirit, and cast me headlong down the imaginary ascent my busy thoughts had climbed to!

“Five hundred pounds,” continued Mr. Crobble; “d’ye think—have you any friends?”

“None, sir; my father is a poor man, and quite unable.” I could scarcely speak—like the driver of the one-horse chaise, I could neither advance nor recede.

“The father,” said Mr. Timmis, “is only a poor shoe-maker—a good fellow tho’—an excellent fit!”

“You mean to say,” cried Mr. Wallis, “it were bootless to seek security of the shoe-maker.”

A laugh ensued; and, notwithstanding my agitated feelings, I could not forbear being tickled by Mr. Wallis's humour, and joining in the merriment.

This sally gave a most favourable turn to the discussion. "Come," said Mr. Wallis, "I'll stand two hundred and fifty—and you, Timmis, must go the other."

"No; d___ me, he may bolt with the cash-box, and let me in, perhaps," exclaimed Mr. Timmis. I burst into tears; I felt, that from my long and faithful services, I deserved a better opinion—although I had no right to expect so great a favour.

Rude as he was, he felt some compunction at having wounded my feelings; and swore a round oath that he was only joking, and I was a fool. "Did I think, for a moment, that Wally should get the start of him; no—I was an honest chap, and he'd put his fist to double the amount to serve me;" and then bade me "sit to the books," and make all square before I cut my stick: and thus happily concluded this most momentous change in my circumstances.

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CHAPTER XV.—An Old Acquaintance.

"Only three holidays left, and still this plaguey glass says 'very wet;'—I can't bear it—I can't—and I won't."

How impatiently did I count the minutes 'till the office was closed, for I longed to communicate the glad tidings of my good fortune to my worthy father. The old man wept with joy at the prospect, and assisted me in rearing those beautiful fabrics termed castles in the air.

His own trade, by the recommendation of the rough, ill-mannered, but good-natured Mr. Timmis, had wonderfully increased; and, by making some temporary sacrifices, he was enabled to give me an appearance more suitable to the new position in which I was so unexpectedly placed. In a narrow alley, on the south side of the Royal Exchange, on the ground-floor, I found the counting-house of Mr. Crobble. Under his directions, I quickly made myself master of the details of the business. Alas! it was but the slender fragment of a once flourishing mercantile house, of which time had gradually lopped off the correspondents, whilst his own inertness had not supplied the deficiency by a new connexion; for his father had left him such an ample fortune, that he was almost careless of the pursuit, although he could not make up his mind, as he said, to abandon the "old shop," where his present independence had been accumulated. I consequently found plenty of leisure, uninterrupted by the continual hurry and bustle of a broker's office, to pursue my favourite studies, and went on, not only to the entire satisfaction of Mr. Crobble, but to my own, and really began to find myself a man of some importance.

In the course of business, I one day fell in with an old acquaintance.

"A parcel for Cornelius Crobble, Esq.," said a little porter, of that peculiar stamp which is seen hanging about coach-offices—"Two and-sixpence."

I looked at the direction, and drew out the "petty cash" to defray the demand; when, then, first looking at the man, I thought I recognised his features.

"What!" cried I, "Isn't your name—"

"Matthew," answered he quickly.

"Matthew!—why, don't you know me?"

"No, sir," replied he, staring vacantly at me.

"Indeed!—Have I so outgrown all knowledge? Don't you recollect Andrew Mullins?"

"Good heavins!" exclaimed he, with his well-remembered nasal twang; "are you—"

“Yes.”

“Well, I declare now you’ve growed into a gentleman. I should’nt—I really should’nt—” He did not say what he really “should not”—but extended his hand.—“Hope you ain’t too proud to shake hands with an old friend?—”

I shook him heartily by the hand, and made some enquiries touching his history.

Poor Matthew seated himself with all the ease imaginable, and laid his knot beside him, and began, after the manner of his favourite heroes, to “unbosom himself.”

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"You've a father," said he; "but I'm a horphan, without father nor mother—a houtcast!"—and he sunk his head upon his bosom; and I observed that his scrubby crop was already becoming thin and bald.

"Since I left the place in the 'lane,' I've bin a-going—down—down"—and he nearly touched the floor with his hand. "That gal, Mary, was the ruin of me—I shall never forget her.—My hopes is sunk, like the sun in the ocean, never to rise agin!" I was rather amused by this romantic, though incorrect, figure; but I let him proceed: "I've got several places, but lost 'em all. I think there's a spell upon me; and who can struggle against his fate?"

I tried to console him, and found, upon a further confession, that he had flown to spirits "now and then," to blunt the sharp tooth of mental misery.

Here, then, was the chief cause of his want of success, which he blindly attributed to fate—the common failing of all weak minds. For my part, notwithstanding the imperial authority of the great Napoleon himself, I have no faith in Fate, believing that the effect, whether good or bad, may invariably be traced to some cause in the conduct of the individual, as certainly as the loss of a man, in a game of draughts, is the consequence of a "wrong move" by the player!—And poor Matthew's accusation of Fate put me in mind of the school-boy, who, during a wet vacation, rushed vindictively at the barometer, and struck it in the face, exclaiming—"Only three holidays left, and still this plaguey glass says 'very wet;'—I can't bear it—I can't—and I won't."

I did all in my power to comfort the little porter, exhorting him to diligence and sobriety.

"You were always a kind friend," said he, pathetically; "and perhaps—perhaps you will give me something to drink your health, for old-acquaintance sake." This unexpected turn compelled me to laughter. I gave him sixpence.

Alas! Matthew, I found, was but a piece of coarse gingerbread, tricked out with the Dutch metal of false sentiment.

CHAPTER XVI.—The Loss of a Friend.

"I say, ma'am, do you happen to have the hair of 'All round my hat I vears a green villow?"

I was startled by the batho-romantic sentiment of Matthew, somewhat in the same manner as the young lady at the bookseller's, when she was accosted by a musical dustman, with—"I say, ma'am, do you happen to have the hair of 'All round my hat I vears a green villow?"



But, however ridiculous they may appear, such incongruous characters are by no means caricatures—nay, are “as plentiful as blackberries,” especially in the lower grades of society.

I was indulging in a reverie of this sort, when Monsieur Dubois, my kind and gentlemanly tutor, abruptly entered the office. I felt proud in having obtained his friendship—for he was to me a mine of wealth, and appeared master of every subject upon which my curiosity prompted me to inquire, whilst the worthy Frenchman was so flattered by my sincere respect, that he took a delight in imparting his knowledge to so willing and diligent a scholar.

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Mr. Crobble had promised that I should continue my studies, being much pleased with the proof I had been fortunate enough to give him of my progress, generously offering to defray the charges of tuition; and I found in my new place, even more time than when in the employ of Mr. Timmis: for, indeed, half-a-clerk would have been sufficient to have conducted the whole business.

I was no less surprised at the unusual abruptness of approach, than at the extraordinary excitement apparent in the manner of Monsieur Dubois; for he always boasted of his coolness and philosophy under all circumstances.

“Peace, peace!—‘mon cher ami’—peace is proclaim”—cried he, raising his hat and his eyes to the dingy ceiling of our office—“Grace a Dieu!—le tyran Napoleon—le charlatan est renverse de son piedestal—oui, mon eleve—I vill see, again once more my dear France!”

He grasped my hand in his ecstasy, and tears filled his eyes to overflowing. I had heard rumours of the restoration of the Bourbons, but I had not anticipated the loss of my inestimable tutor.

I was almost ashamed of my selfishness; but vanquished my feelings so far as to congratulate him on his prospects, with as much cordiality and appearance of truth as I could assume.

“I trust, however,” said I, “that restored to your country, and your friends, you will find that happiness you so much deserve. Go where you will, you will be followed by the regrets of your English friends.”

“Ah! les Anglais!—‘combien’—how motch ‘reconnaissance?’” said he, “I vill have for them! I sall them forget nevere!”

Mr. Crobble interrupted our colloquy. “All right t’other side the channel, Mounseer,” cried he, elated; “we’ve licked Boney: he’s done up; stocks are up; and Timmis, (your old master, Andrew) is as busy as a bee —only he’s making money instead of honey!”

He shook hands with Monsieur Dubois; and congratulated him upon the restoration of Louis the Eighteenth.

I mentioned to him Monsieur Dubois’ intention of proceeding immediately to France. “He’s right,” cried he; “let every man stick to his King and his country; and I say”—he suddenly checked himself, and beckoning me aside, continued in an under tone—“Andrew, you understand this Mounseer better than I do; he appears a good fellow in the main: if he should want a lift, to fit him out for the voyage, or any thing of that sort, tell him Corny Crobble will lend him a hand, for old acquaintance sake; I shan’t stick at a matter of forty or fifty pound—you understand—put it to him, as a matter of business; for

that'll suit his proud stomach best, perhaps"—then, turning to Monsieur, he said, "Excuse whispering before company, Mounseer Dubois. Good morning."

"Bon jour, Monsieur," replied Dubois, making my obese governor one of his most graceful bows.

I was highly gratified at being selected as the medium of this generous offer; which Monsieur Dubois received without hesitation, as one who intended to repay it; but, at the same time, with the most grateful acknowledgments of Mr. Crobble's considerate kindness.

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CHAPTER XVII.—Promotion.

"I, think there must be something wrong about your rowing,"

"My rowing!" cried I; "nonsense!—it's because you don't steer right."

"I remember, when I was a young man, I once took a fancy to rowing," said Mr. Crobble one day to me. "I wasn't then quite so round as I am at present. Cousin Tom and I hired a wherry, but somehow we found we didn't make much way. Tom was steering, and I took the sculls, sitting my back to him like a gaby!"

"I, think there must be something wrong about your rowing," said Tom.

"My rowing!" cried I; "nonsense!—it's because you don't steer right. Well, at last a waterman came alongside, and grinning (the fellow couldn't help it) good-naturedly, pointed out the cause of our dilemma; at which we both laughed heartily. Ever since that time I've been of opinion, that unless people, 'who row in the same boat,' understand each other, they'll never get along—"

I smiled at this lengthy prologue, not conceiving to what it could possibly lead.

"Now, Mr. Andrew," resumed he, "I mean to be very industrious, and devote a whole day to giving you an insight into the business; after which I expect you'll pull away, while I only steer, which will suit me to a T—, you understand."

"Exactly, sir," I replied; and, in consequence, he really set about the task; and I soon acquired sufficient knowledge in the business, as not only to row in the same boat with him, but, what was still more agreeable to my patron's indolence, to manage the "craft" without his assistance.

Six months after the departure of Monsieur Dubois, he sent a remittance, with interest on the amount, advanced by Mr. Crobble, with a long epistle to me, stating, that he had entered into partnership with his elder brother, and commenced the business of a banker, under the firm of "Dubois Freres," at the same time informing me that they were already doing a large stroke of business, and wanted an agent in London, requesting me to inform him if it would be agreeable to Mr. Crobble for them to draw upon his respectable house.

I saw at once the advantages of this correspondence, and so warmly solicited Mr. Crobble to accede, that he at last consented, provided I undertook the whole management of the affair.

The English were now daily flocking to Paris, and the money required for their lavish expenditure in the gay capital of France compelled their application to the bankers.

Messrs. Dubois Freres had their share of this lucrative business, and, as their agents in London, we necessarily became participators in their large transactions.

In three months these operations had increased so enormously, and the profits were so considerable, that Mr. Crobble not only advanced my salary, but consented to engage the assistance of two junior clerks. I was now a man of some consideration. I was the senior clerk of the establishment, although the youngest of the three.

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In two years I found myself at the head of six clerks, and had as much business as I could possibly manage.

My star was in the ascendant. I had not only more money than I required for my expenses, but was enabled to maintain my poor old father, who daily became more and more infirm.

I rented a small cottage at the rural village of Hackney, but my labour occupied me early and late, and it was only on a Sunday I could really enjoy my home.

Three years after quitting the office of Mr. Timmis, I had the inexpressible pleasure of employing him to purchase stock for his errand boy! I was proud as a king.

"I said that boy would turn out well," said the good-natured Mr. Wallis; "he always had a good principle."

"And now bids fair," said Mr. Timmis, "to have both principal and interest."

Mr. Crobble having lately had a large property left him in Hertfordshire, rarely came to the office above once a-quarter, to settle accounts.

"A good dividend—a very good dividend!" said he, upon receipt of the last quarter's profits. "But, Mr. Mullins, I cannot forget that this business is your child."

"And I'm happy to say a thriving one," I replied.

"Are you satisfied—perfectly satisfied?" demanded he.

"Beyond my wishes, sir."

"I am not," said he shortly.

"No, sir?" exclaimed I, with surprise.

"No, Sir!" repeated he. "Those who sow should reap. I've no children—I'm an idle fellow—a drone, sir—and won't consent to consume all the honey. Don't speak, sir—read that!" and he pulled a parchment from his pocket.

It was a deed of partnership between Cornelius Crobble, of Lodge, Hertfordshire, Esquire, and the poor cobbler's son,

Andrew Mullins.

A RIGMAROLE.—PART I.

“De omnibus rebus.”

The evening is calm—the sun has just sunk below the tiles of the house, which serenely bounds the view from the quiet attic where I wield the anserine plume for the delectation of the pensive public—all nature, *etc.*—the sky is deep blue, tinged with mellowest red, like a learned lady delicately rouged, and ready for a literary soiree—the sweet-voiced pot-boy has commenced his rounds with “early beer,” and with leathern lungs, and a sovereign contempt for the enactments of the new police-act —greasy varlets proclaim to the hungry neighbourhood—“Baked sheeps’ heads, hot!”—O! savoury morsel!—May no legislative measure ever silence this peripatetic purveyor to the poor! or prevent his calling—may the tag-rag and bob-tail never reject a sheep’s head!

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"I never sees a sheep's head, but I thinks on you," said Mrs. Spriggins, whose physiognomy was as yellow and as wrinkled as a duck's foot. Spriggins whipped his horse, for they were driving in a one-horse chaise, with two boys, and an infant in arms—Spriggins whipped his horse spitefully, for Mrs. S.'s sarcasm inspired him with a splenetic feeling; and as he durst not chastise her, the animal received the benefit of her impetus. Spriggins was a fool by nature, and selfish by disposition. Mrs. S. was a shrivelled shrew, with a "bit o' money;"—that was the bait at which he, like a hungry gudgeon, had seized, and he was hooked! The "spousals" had astonished the vulgar—the little nightingale of Twickenham would have only smiled; for has he not sweetly sung—

"There swims no goose so grey, but soon or late
She finds some honest gander for her mate;"

and her union was a verification of this flowing couplet.

At different times, what different meanings the self-same words obtain. According to the reading of the new poor-law guardians, "Union," as far as regards man and wife, is explained "Separation;" or, like a ship when in distress, the "Union" is reversed! In respect of his union, Spriggins would have most relished the reading of the former! But there are paradoxes—a species of verbal puzzle—which, in the course of this ride, our amiable family of the Spriggins's experienced to their great discomfort.

Drawing up a turnpike-gate, Mrs. S. handed a ticket to the white-aproned official of the trust.

"You should have gone home the way you came out—that ticket won't do here," said the man; "so out with your coppers—three-pence."

"I don't think I've got any half-pence!" said Mr. S., fumbling in his pennyless pocket.

"Well, then, I must give you change."

"But I'm afraid I hav'nt got any silver," replied Mr. S., with a long face.—"I say, mister, cou'dn't you trust me?—I'd be very sure to bring it to you."

But the man only winked, and, significantly pointing the thumb of his left hand over his sinister shoulder, backed the horse.

"Vell, I'm blessed," exclaimed Mr. S.—and so he was—with a scolding wife and a squalling infant; "and they calls this here a trust, the fools! and there ain't no trust at all!"

And the poor animal got another vindictive cut. Oh! Mr. Martin!—thou friend of quadrupeds!—would that thou had'st been there. "It's all my eye and Betty Martin!" muttered Mr. S., as he wheeled about the jaded beast he drove, and retraced the road.

A RIMAROLE—PART II.

“Acti labores sunt jucundi”

The horse is really a noble animal—I hate all rail-roads, for putting his nose out of joint—puffing, blowing, smoking, jotting—always going in a straight line: if this mania should continue, we shall soon have the whole island ruled over like a copy-book—nothing but straight lines—and sloping lines through every county in the kingdom!

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Give me the green lanes and hills, when I'm inclined to diverge; and the smooth turnpike roads, when disposed to "go a-head."—"I can't bear a horse," cries Numps: now this feeling is not at all reciprocal, for every horse can bear a man. "I'm off to the Isle of Wight," says Numps: "Then you're going to Ryde at last," quoth I, "notwithstanding your hostility to horse-flesh." "Wrong!" replies he, "I'm going to Cowes." "Then you're merely a mills-and-water traveller, Numps!" The ninny! he does not know the delight of a canter in the green fields—except, indeed, the said canter be of the genus-homo, and a field preacher!

My friend Rory's the boy for a horse; he and his bit o' blood are notorious at all the meetings. In fact I never saw him out of the saddle: he is a perfect living specimen of the fabled Centaur—full of anecdotes of fox-chases, and steeple-chases; he amuses me exceedingly. I last encountered him in a green lane near Hornsey, mounted on a roadster—his "bit o' blood" had been sent forward, and he was leisurely making his way to the appointed spot.

"I was in Buckinghamshire last week," said he; "a fine turn out—such a field! I got an infernal topper tho'—smashed my best tile; tell you how it was. There was a high paling—put Spitfire to it, and she took it in fine style; but, as luck would have it, the gnarled arm of an old tree came whop against my head, and bonneted me completely! Thought I was brained—but we did it cleverly however—although, if ever I made a leap in the dark, that was one. I was at fault for a minute—but Spitfire was all alive, and had it all her own way: with some difficulty I got my nob out of the beaver-trap, and was in at the death!"

I laughed heartily at his awkward dilemma, and wishing him plenty of sport, we parted.

Poor Rory! he has suffered many a blow and many a fall in his time; but he is still indefatigable in the pursuit of his favourite pastime—so true is it—that

"The pleasure we delight in physic's pain;"

his days pass lightly, and all his years are leap years!

He has lately inherited a considerable property, accumulated by a miserly uncle, and has most appropriately purchased an estate in one of the Ridings of Yorkshire!

With all his love for field-sports, however, he is no better "the better," says he, "is often the worse; and I've no notion of losing my acres in gambling; besides, my chief aim being to be considered a good horseman, I should be a consummate fool, if, by my own folly, I lost my seat!"

A RIGMAROLE—PART III.

“Oderunt hilarem tristes.”

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The sad only hate a joke. Now, my friend Rory is in no sense a sad fellow, and he loves a joke exceedingly. His anecdotes of the turf are all racy; nor do those of the field less deserve the meed of praise! Lord F_____ was a dandy sportsman, and the butt of the regulars. He was described by Rory as a “walkingstick”—slender, but very “knobby”—with a pair of mustaches and an eye-glass. Having lost the scent, he rode one day slick into a gardener’s ground, when his prad rammed his hind-legs into a brace of hand-glasses, and his fore-legs into a tulip-bed. The horticulturist and the haughty aristocrat—how different were their feelings—the cucumber coolness of the ‘nil admirari’ of the one was ludicrously contrasted with the indignation of the astonished cultivator of the soil. “Have you seen the hounds this way?” demanded Lord F_____, deliberately viewing him through his glass.

“Hounds!” bitterly repeated the gardener, clenching his fist. “Dogs, I mean,” continued Lord F_____; “you know what a pack of hounds are--don’t you?”

“I know what a puppy is,” retorted the man; “and if so be you don’t budge, I’ll spile your sport. But, first and foremost, you must lug out for the damage you have done—you’re a trespasser.”

“I’m a sportsman, fellow—what d’ye mean?”

“Then sport the blunt,” replied the gardener; and, closing his gates, took Lord F_____ prisoner: nor did he set him free till he had reimbursed him for the mischief he had done.

This was just; and however illegal were the means, I applauded them for the end.

Our friend B____d, that incorrigible punster, said, “that his horse had put his foot in—and he had paid his footing,”

B____d, by the bye, is a nonpareil; whether horses, guns, or dogs, he is always “at home:” and even in yachting, (as he truly boasts) he is never “at sea.” Riding with him one day in an omnibus, I praised the convenience of the vehicle; “An excellent vehicle,” said he, “for punning;”—which he presently proved, for a dowager having flopped into one of the seats, declared that she “never rid without fear in any of them omnibus things.”

“What is she talking about?” said I.

“De omnibus rebus,” replied he,—“truly she talks like the first lady of the land; but, as far as I can see, she possesses neither the carriage nor the manners!”

“Can you read the motto on the Conductor’s button?” I demanded. “No;” he replied, “but I think nothing would be more appropriate to his calling than the monkish phrase—‘pro omnibus curo!’”

At this juncture a jolt, followed by a crash, announced that we had lost a wheel. The Dowager shrieked. “We shall all be killed,” cried she; “On’y to think of meeting vun’s death in a common omnibus!”

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“Mors communis omnibus!” whispered B___d, and---

I had written thus far, when spit—spit—splutter—plop!—my end of candle slipped into the blacking bottle in which it was “sustained,” and I was left to admire—the stars of night, and to observe that “Charles’s wain was over the chimney;” so I threw down my pen—and, as the house was a-bed—and I am naturally of a “retiring” disposition, I sought my pallet—dreaming of literary fame!—although, in the matter of what might be in store for me, I was completely in the dark!

AN INTERCEPTED LETTER FROM DICK SLAMMER TO HIS FRIEND SAM FLYKE.

eppin-toosday

my dear sam

i’ve rote this ere for to let you no i’m in jolly good health and harty as a brick—and hope my tulip as your as vell——read this to sal who can’t do the same herself seeing as her edication aintt bin in that line ——give her my love and tell her to take care o’ the kids. ——i’ve got a silk vipe for sal, tell her; and suffing for ’em all, for i’ve made a xlent spec o’ the woy’ge and bagg’d some tin too i can tell you; and vont ve have a blow out ven i cums among you——napps——that’s the ass——is particklar vell and as dun his dooty like a riq’lar flint——

i rode too races ar’ needn’t say as i vun em for napps is a houtanhouter an no mistake!

lork! didn’t i make the natifs stare! and a gintlum as vos by, vanted to oan ’im an oferd any blunt for im but walker! says i there aint sick a ass as this ’ere hanimal in the hole country——besides he’s like as vun o’ me oan famly, for i’ve brot im up in a manner from the time he vos a babby!——he’s up to a move or too and knows my voice jist for all the world like a Chrissen.

Red-nose Bill vot had a nook ’em down here brings this and he’ll tell you all about the noose——i shall foller in about, a veek or so——tell sal to keep up her sperrits and not to lush vith Bet——i dont like that ere ooman at all——a idle wagabone as is going to the Union like vinkin——i’m no temperens cove meself as you nose, sam, but enufs enuf and as good as a feast.

The gintry as taken hervite a likin to Napps and me——they looks upon im as hervite a projidy——for he’s licked all the donkies as run agin im——the vimmen too——(you no my insinnivating vay, sam,) and nobody nose better than me how to git the right sow by



the ear——no sooner do i see 'em a comin vith their kids, than i slips of and doffs my tile, an i says, says i——do let the yung jentlum have a cast——and then the little in coorse begins a plegyin the old 'uns, and——so the jobs done!

——vot's to pay, my good man? says she

——oh——nothink, marm, says i, as modest as a turnip new-peeld——napps is a rig'lar racer——i dont let im hout but i'm so fond o' children!

——this here Yummeree doos the bisnis prime, for the vimmen comes over the jentlum and a pus is made up for anuther race——and in coorse i pockits the Bibs——cos vy?
——napps is nothink but a good 'un.

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'tother day hearin as there vos an hunt in the naborwood:——napps, says i-a——speakin to my ass——napps ve'll jist go and look at 'em——

——vell ve hadnt got no more nor a mile wen i comes slap alongside of a starch-up chap upatop of raythur a good lookin' oss.——but my i! vornt there bellows to mend; and he made no more vay nor a duck in a gutter.——i says, sir, says i, dye think ve shall be in time for the hunt? but he never turns is hed but sets bolt uprite as stiff as pitch——jist for all the world as if his mother had vashed im in starch.

——i twigs his lean in a jiffy——so i says says i “oh-you needn't be so shy i rides my own hannimal,”——

——vich i takes it vos more nor he co'd say, for his vas nothin more nor a borrod'un and if i dont mistake he vos a vitechabler——i think ive seed im a sarvin out svipes and blue ruin at the gin-spinners corner o' summerset street or petticut lane——dunno witch.

——sam, i hates pride so i cuts his cumpny——i says says i——napps it dont fit you aint a nunter you're o'ny a racer and that chaps afeard his prad vill be spiled a keeping conapny with a ass——leastways i'm o' the same opinyon in that respec consarnin meself and——so i shall mizzle.

——a true gintlum as is a gintlum, sam is as difrent to these here stuck-up fellers az a sovrin is to a coronashun copper vot's on'y gilt.

vell lie turns hof over the left and vips up his animal tryin to get up a trot——bobbin up and down in his sturrups and bumpin hissself to make a show——all flummery!——he takes the middel o' the field to hissself, and i cox my i for a houtlet and spi's a gait——that's the ticket! says i; so liting the 'bacca and blowin a cloud I trots along, and had jist cum to the gait ven turnin' round to look for the gin-spinner, blow me! sam, if i didn't see the cove again heels over head over an edge——like a tumler at bartlmy fare;——vile his preshus hannimal vas a takin it cooly in the meddo!

“vat a rum chap”——says i, a larfin reddy to bust——“vat a rum chap to go over the 'edge that vay! ven here's a riglar gait to ride through!”

——and so, i druv on, but somehow, sam, i coudn't help a thinkin' as praps the waggerbun lead broke his nek——stif as it vas! and so i said to napps——“napps,”——says i——“lets go and look arter the warmint for charity's-sake”

——napps vots as good-natur'd a ass as his master, didn't make no obstacle and so ve vent——

——my i!——sam, i'd a stood a Kervorten and three outs ad you a bin there!——there vas my jentlum up to his nek in a duckpond——lookin' as miserribble as a stray o' mutton in a batter puddin'



“halp! halp!” says he, a spittin’ the green veeds out of his mouth——“halp me, faller, and i’ll stand a bob” or summat to that efeck.

——but i couldn’t hold out my fin to him for larfin——and napps begun a brayin at sich a rate——vich struck me as if he vas a larfin too, and made me larf wusser than ever——



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—vell, at last, i contrivis to lug him out, and a preshus figger he cut to be sure—he had kervite a new sute o' black mud, vich didn't smell particlar sweet i can tell you.

—“ain't hurt yoursef?” says i, “have you?”

—“no”——says he——“but i'm dem wet and utterably spiled”——or vords like that for he chewd'em so fine i couldn't rightly hit 'em.

—ater i'd scraped him a little desent, and he'd tip'd a hog——vich vas rayther hansum——i ax'd him vere he'd left his tile?

“tile?”——says he——a yogglin his i's and openin' his jaws like a dyin' oyster “yes your castor”——says i, “your beaver your hat.”

“Oh!”----says he, p'inting dismal to the pond----“gone to the devil d____ me!”——so vith that he takes out a red and yuller vipe, and ties it about his hed, lookin' for all the world like a apple-ooman.

——as he had come down hansum i in coorse ofer'd to ketch his prad vich va'n't much difficulty——and up he jumps and lepped with a squosh into the saddle——and rid of vithout as much as sayin' by your leave good luck to you or anythink else——

——vell, this here vos the end and upshot o' that day's fun for I vos too late for the start by ten minnits——i saw 'em goin' it at a distance so i takes a sight!——but i had too much valley for napes to put im to it so as to get up vith 'em——or he might a done it praps!——

——i've lived like a fightin cock and am as fatt as butter——but the race is goin' to begin in a hour and i must go and ketch napps who's a grazin on the commun and looks oncommun vell——so no more at present from,

Yours, my prime 'un,

dick stammer.