

RICHARD BLACKMORE

THE REMARKABLE
HISTORY OF SIR
THOMAS UPMORE,
BART., M.P., FORMERLY
KNOWN AS «TOMMY
UPMORE»

Richard Blackmore

**The Remarkable History of Sir
Thomas Upmore, bart., M.P.,
formerly known as «Tommy Upmore»**

«Public Domain»

Blackmore R.

The Remarkable History of Sir Thomas Upmore, bart., M.P., formerly known as «Tommy Upmore» / R. Blackmore — «Public Domain»,

Содержание

PREFACE	5
CHAPTER I.	7
CHAPTER II.	11
CHAPTER III.	14
CHAPTER IV.	18
CHAPTER V.	25
CHAPTER VI.	29
CHAPTER VII.	33
CHAPTER VIII.	37
CHAPTER IX.	41
CHAPTER X.	45
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	49

R. D. Blackmore
The Remarkable History of Sir
Thomas Upmore, bart., M.P.,
formerly known as «Tommy Upmore»

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"My purpose is a larger one, than merely to talk of my own doings. I want to put common sense into plain English, and to show — as our medical men show daily — that the body is beyond the comprehension of the mind. The mind commands the body to lie down, and be poked at, and probed, and pried into, with fifty subtle instruments, or even to be cut up, and analysed alive; and then understands never the more of it. If the mind can learn nothing of the body it lives in, grows,

rejoices, and suffers with, how can it know all about it, for millions of years before either existed? How can it trace their joint lineage up to a thing, that had neither a head, nor a body?

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

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

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

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

R. D. Blackmore.

1885.

CHAPTER I. SIGNS OF EMINENCE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Like many other people, who have contrived to surprise the world before they stopped, I did not begin too early. As a child, I did what the other children did, and made no attempt to be a man too soon. Having plenty of time on my hands, I enjoyed it, and myself, without much thought. My mother alone perceived that nature intended me for greatness, because I was the only child she had. And when I began to be a boy, I took as kindly as any boy to marbles, peg-top, tip-cat, toffy, lollipops, and fireworks, the pelting of frogs, and even of dogs, unless they retaliated, and all the other delights included in the education of the London boy; whose only remarkable exploit is to escape a good hiding every day of his life.

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

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

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

One day, while he was with us, I came in with an appetite ready for dinner, and a tint of outer air upon me, from a wholesome play on the cinder-heaps. "Lord, bless this Tommy," cried Uncle William; "he looks as if he ought to go to heaven!" And without another word, being very tall and

strong, he caught hold of me under the axle of my arms, to give me a little toss upward. But instead of coming down again, up I went, far beyond the swing of his long arms. My head must have gone into the ceiling of the passage, among the plaster and the laths; and there I stuck fast by the peak of my cap, which was strapped beneath my chin with Spanish leather. To see, or to cry, was alike beyond my power, eyes and mouth being choked with dust; and the report of those who came running below is that I could only kick. However, before I was wholly done for, somebody fetched the cellar-steps, and with very great difficulty pulled me down.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This closed all discussion, and clenched my fate, and our tailor was ordered to come next morning. My father had striven his utmost to get me taken as a day-boy, or at any rate to be allowed to keep a book against the Muses. But Mrs. Rumbelow waved her hand, and enlarged upon liberal associations, and the higher walks of literature, to such an extent that my father could not put a business foot in anywhere. And before I was sent to bed that night, when I went for my head to be patted, and to get a chuck below the chin, he used words which hung long in my memory.

"Poor Tommy, thy troubles are at hand;" he said, with a tender gaze at me beneath his pipe. "They can't make no profit from the victualling of thy mind; but they mean to have it out of thy

body, little chap. 'Tis a woe as goes always to the making of a man. And the Lord have mercy on thee, my son Tommy!"

CHAPTER II.

ITUR AD ASTRA

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

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

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

Bill Chumps, being very quick at figures, had made bright hits about holidays impending, by noting the contents of the paternal cart, and blowing the Sibylline leaves of the meat-book, handed in by the foreman. But even Chumps was not prepared for a thing that happened one fine Friday.

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

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

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

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

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

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

We did not expect him to get up yet for nearly three-quarters of an hour, unless any boy wanted caning; and at first a cold tremor ran through our inmost bones, because we respected him so deeply. But a glance at his countenance reassured us. The doctor stood up, with his college-cap on, a fine smile lifting his gabled eyebrows (as the evening sun lights up gray thatch), his tall frame thrown back, and his terrible right hand peacefully, under his waistcoat, loosening the button of didactic cincture. He spread forth the other hand, with no cane in it; and a yawn – such as we should have had a smack for – came to keep company with his smile.

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

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

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

To the ear of reason it would have been brought home, that the boys were holloaing quite loud enough; and of that opinion was our master, who laid his hands under his silvery locks, while the smile of good-will to us, whom he loved and chastened, came down substantially to the margin of his shave. But behold, to him thus beholding, a new and hitherto unheard-of prodigy, wonderful to be told, arose! He sought for his spectacles, and put them on; and then for his cane, and laid hold of it – because he beheld going up into the air, and likely to get out of his reach, a boy!

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

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

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

I do not exaggerate in saying that I strove with all my power to do this; and with his kind help I might have done it, if the string of my shoe had been sewed in. But unhappily, like most things now, it was made for ornament more than use; and so it slipped out and was left in his hand; while, much against my will, I rose higher and higher. At the same time I found myself going round and round, so that I could not continue to observe the countenance of Dr. Rumbelow, gazing sternly, and with some surprise, at me. But I saw him put on his spectacles, which was always a bad sign for us.

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

For no sooner had I heard what was likely to befall me, than my heart seemed to turn into a lump of cold lead. At once my airy revolutions ceased, my hands (which had been hovering like butterflies)

stopped, and dropped, like beetles that have struck against a post, and down I came plump, with both feet upon the tassel of the trencher-cap upon the doctor's head.

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

CHAPTER III. THE DAWN OF SCIENCE

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

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

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

From the very outset, they felt this; and my father and mother, who had not slept well, through talking so much of my above adventure – recounted perhaps with some embellishment by Chumps – hardly had got through their breakfast before some eminent "scientists" were at them. For my part, having made a hearty supper, (after long scarcity of butcher's meat,) or perhaps from having swallowed so much air, I had slept long and soundly, and was turning for another good sleep, when I heard great voices.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"My mind is not altogether clear," said mother, "about letting him go back to the Latin Pantheon" – this was her name for the *Partheneion*; "he is welcome to have a gentle fly now and then,

as Providence has so endowed him, and I am sure he would never fly away from his own mother; but as for his flying, because he is empty in his poor inside – I'll not hear of it. Bucephalus, how would you like it?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"That's the best thing I ever heard in my life;" cried father, as soon as he could stop laughing, while Chumps was grinning wisely, with his mouth full of pudding. "What a glorious investment of my ten guineas, to have a son so learned, that he can't produce a word of it, because it all sticks together! To-morrow, my boy, you shall go back for the rest of it. Like a lump of grains it seems to be, that you can't get into with a mashing-stick. Ah, I shall tell that joke to-night!"

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER IV. THE PURSUIT OF SCIENCE

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

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

But to me, alas, no political study of this kind was presented. All the other boys could whack me, and expostulation led to more. Because I was the smallest, and most peaceful, among all the little ones, and the buoyancy of my nature made a heavy blow impossible. Yet upon the whole, the others were exceedingly kind and good to me, rejoicing to ply me with countless nicknames, of widely various grades of wit, suggested by my personal appearance, and the infirmity of lightness. Tomtit, Butterfly-Upmore, Flying Tommy, and Skylark, were some of the names that I liked best, and answered to most freely; while I could not bear to be called Soap-suds, Bubbly, Blue-bottle, or Blow-me-tight. But whatever it was, it served its turn; and the boy, who had been witty at my expense, felt less disposed to knock me.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A glow of joy came into my heart, and dried up my tears in a wink or two, for we knew him to be a true man of his word, whether to cane, or to abstain; and if the professors had kept in the background, I might have soared up for them, then and there. But it never is their nature to do that; and before I had time to be really happy, four out of the five were upon me. Hearing the doctor's fine loud voice, they could no more contain themselves, but dashed out upon us, like so many dragons,

on the back of their own eminence – Professors Brachipod, and Jargoon, Chocoulous, and Mullicles; than whom are none more eminent on the roll of modern science. The fifth, and greatest of them all, whose name shall never be out-rubbed by time, but cut deeper every year, Professor Megalow, sat calmly on a three-legged stool, which he had found.

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

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

Beginning to feel my own importance, I began to grow quite brave almost, and ventured to take down my hands from my face, and turn round a little, and peep from the corners of my eyes at these great magicians. And as soon as I saw, that the foremost of them had been carried out of our house by father, and sent away over the cinder-heaps, there came a sort of rising in my mind, which told me to try to stick up to them. And when they fell out one with another, as they lost no time in doing, they made me think somehow about the old women who came to pick over our ash-heaps – until through the doorway I saw another face, the kindest and grandest I ever had seen, the face of Professor Megalow.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He turned round in triumph, and a loud laugh met him. He was weighing my jacket, without me inside it. For mother had told me, a hundred times, that a child had much better be killed, than

weighed. At the fright of his touch, I slipped out of my sleeves, and set off at the top of my speed away. In the passage, I found a side door open, and without looking back dashed through it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Oh, gentlemen, kind gentle gentlemen," I sobbed, dropping down on my knees before them, "do please let me go to my father, and mother. They live close by, and they think so much of me, and I am sure they would pay you, for all your inventions, a great deal more than the Government. I

only flew once, and I didn't mean to fly, and I am sure it must have been a mistake altogether; and I will promise, upon my Sammy, as Bill Chumps says, not to do it any more. Oh, please to let me go! It is so late; and I beg your pardon humbly."

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

"Stow that rubbish," broke in Jargoon.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Now certain it is, that all the science they were made of, could never have extricated those professors, without the strong arms of my father, and mother, and even small me at the end of the rope. The stuff they were in, being only half cooled (and their bodies grown sticky with running so), fastened heavily on them, like tallow on a wick, closing so completely both mouth and eyes,

that instead of giving, they could only receive, a lesson in materialism. Professors Brachipod, and Chocolous, being scarcely five feet and a quarter in height, were in great danger of perishing; but Mullicles, and Jargoon, most kindly gave them a jump now and then, for breath. And, to be quit of an unfragrant matter, and tell it more rapidly than we did it, – with the aid of a blue-man from the Indigo works, and of two thickset waggoners, we rescued those four gentlemen from their sad situation, and condoled with them.

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

CHAPTER V. "GRIP."

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

To make it quite certain, that no man of science should analyse, synthesise, generalise, or in any way scientise me, I was now provided with a guardian, intrepid of neologisms ten yards long. The father of our Bill Chumps, Mr. Chumps, the Purveyor of Meat, was the owner of a dog, who was the father of a pup, who was threatening, every day, to make mincemeat of the author of his existence. The old dog might have tackled him, Bill told me, or at any rate could have shown a good turn-up, but for having broken his best fighting-tooth, on the spiked collar of the last mastiff he had slain. Through this disability on the part of old *Fangs*, he found his son *Grip* too many for him; yet could not be brought to confess it, and abstain from a battle, at every opportunity. These encounters in no wise disturbed Mr. Chumps, but became inconvenient to Mrs. Chumps, when she heard the piano (which had cost £10, for her daughter, Belinda, to learn her scales) upset, and entirely demolished. If it had been possible to hang *Grip*, hanged he would have been that very day; for the mistress had nursed *Fangs* through his distemper, and never would listen to a word against him. Whereas the whole fault was upon the side of *Fangs*; of which I am quite certain, from the character of *Grip*, as it unfolded itself before me, when he became my own dear dog.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"What! Has Chumps no more conscience, than to impose upon a friend like this? I, who have known him all these years, to pay as good a crown-piece as was ever coined, for a one-eyed, nick-

eared, hare-lipped, broken-tailed son of a [female dog] like that! Gristles, you go back, and tell your master, that you saw me put an ounce of lead through him."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And, after a little while, no one who knew him – at least if he were any judge of a dog – could consider him ugly, from a proper point of view, and without any personal feeling. For his eye, that had seemed to be gone, came back, so as nearly to agree with the other one, yet working enough, on its own account, to redouble his power of expression; while his tail (being oiled and done up with bell-wire) returned to its natural tendency; and as for his ear of a gingery yellow, the colour was so rich that it wanted shading, and gained it by having a division introduced. So that, on the whole, he had succeeded, without any serious damage to himself, in impressing the main principle of the present age – that of parental submission to the child.

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

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

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

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

"No, sir; no, sir; for God's sake don't go near him," cried Bill Chumps, running up the playground; "*Grip* can beat any two men in the world, because no blow can hurt him. Leave him to me, sir; I understand him, and he knows me well enough, though he never took to me, somehow or other, as his dear old father does. He has taken wonderfully to Fly Tommy. Somebody come, and give Tommy a good whack."

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

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

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

With these words, our great master strode to the school-room door; and we (his children and the fruit of his cane) looked vainly for chance of escape from work. Then, with as much of a sigh as childhood yet has learned from nature's book, we followed the learned steps afar, with two for one in length, but only one for two in speed, I ween.

CHAPTER VI. TRUE SCIENCE

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

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

"Tommy," said Bill, the very day he was to leave, when he saw me crying about his departure, for he always had been so good to me, "keep up your spirits, young fellow, and don't blub. The fault of your nature is, being so soft. Now, why am I going to the grandest old place, and the finest young fellows, on the face of the earth? Simply because I have got so much pluck. I am not such a wonderfully clever cove, though everybody seems to think so; and I have plenty to learn yet, I can assure you. And of course I know well enough, that I am going among big swells, who have a right to be swells, not snobs from the Poultry, and Mincing Lane, such as used to try to snub me here. But do you think I have a particle of funk? Feel the muscle in my arm, Tommy."

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

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

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

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

My own opinion was, that without any flying, Bill would arrive at the top of the tree, in about five years, which was a long time yet for any one to look forward to; and thinking so much of him now, and grieving so deeply for the loss of him, I allowed his words to sink into my mind, as they never had done before. Hitherto I had been inclined to think, if ever I thought about it, that my want

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This was very hard upon me; for I had no more chance of opening it, than of flying in the air, as people say, and indeed, according to my gifts, much less. In vain I pulled, and squeezed, and pressed, examined every part of it, and then worked away again, screwing up my lips, and eyes, so sternly that the Professor could not help laughing. And the worst of it was, that the more I laboured, the greater the temptation of the inside grew, everything dancing with a play of colours glorious to see, and feel that all was good to eat.

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

"My boy," said the Professor, looking gravely at me, and seeming to wink with one large clear eye, though it was not a wink, but rather the effect of a most sagacious and delightful nod; "I have

long anticipated that result. It is always agreeable to find one's prognosis confirmed by events, though they often fail to do it. No one has found out the secret of this box, though very clever men have striven at it, and among them three noted puzzle-makers. Perfect simplicity is deeper than any depth of complexity. Tommy, behold, and with good will devour. Ha, a practical, rather than a theoretic mind!"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Not only that, Tommy; although I am perfectly open to conviction upon that point" – here he opened his mouth, and I popped a goody in, as if he were the boy, and I the celebrated man – "but also because, my most generous young friend, it confirms my opinion, or, in finer words, my theory. Most of us, as we get older and older, grow more and more interested in ourselves. Possibly you are too young, small Tommy, to have any desire as yet to hear an empirical, rather than a scientific opinion, about your peculiar, but not altogether unparalleled, case."

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

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

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

The only thing that saddened me was this – he did not appear to be at all astonished, by anything discovered in me. And I now called to mind, that he never had shown any special excitement about my case, as all the other scientific men had done. And my mother had said that he could not be half so clever as his reputation was, because of his letting me alone so. Though perhaps he was paid by

the year for his work, and the others by the job; which would account for everything. That may have been so, and I thought about it now, and concluded (from brief observation of his hat) that he only got his money at the end of the year.

"The difference," said the Professor calmly, with a glance of affection at his large-skulled hat, which was rolling on the floor without taking any harm, "according to my very humble opinion, is not so much of kind as of degree, my Tommy. It has long been well known that the various families of the human race – as we may venture still to call it – differ very greatly in specific gravity; the Celt, for instance, is especially heavy in proportion to his size, and the Jute the opposite. There was, I believe, an exceptionally light and buoyant race in North America, aboriginal so far as we know; and the lightest member of that race, Tommy, would probably have despised your highest flight. At the same time, and although I have met with a case of almost equal levity – the example being, I regret to say, feminine – you must not imagine that I am endeavouring to disparage your exploits, my dear Tommy. Don't cry, my dear child; I had no idea that you were so sensitive upon this matter. Your admirable master has always told me, that your main desire is to stop upon the ground, and that both your parents wish it. You nod your head, as if I understood your feelings. Then why are your blue eyes full of tears?"

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

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

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

"I thank him heartily for his approval;" replied the Professor, at the same time showing me his watch, which ticked with a bullet upon cat-gut; "William Chumps is a fine young man, with a great spirit in a strong body; and I would ask your kind master to let you come, if I thought the subject good for you. But, my dear little fellow, I am sure that it is not so. The less your mind runs upon the regions of the air, and the more you endeavour to bring your body, by good feeding, exercise, pleasant sports, and moderate labours, to the normal specific gravity, the better it will be for yourself, and your parents, whose only child you are. And I venture to differ from my learned brethren, Professors Brachipod, and Jargoon, Chocoulous, and Mullicles, in thinking that it will be no worse for the interests of science. Good-bye, Tommy; you may keep the box, as a souvenir of this long interview; be sure that you eat all you can of good meat, solid bread, and glutinous material; and don't swallow too much Latin and Greek, which tend to undue elation. If you were a lazy boy, I should not tell you this; but I hear that you are an ambitious boy, and eager to learn everything. I shall observe you, my interesting friend, and from time to time hint to your learned master any trifle that escapes the unmedical mind."

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

CHAPTER VII. THE GREAT WASHED

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It appears that my father was by no means satisfied so to lose his hats – though in truth it was no great grievance, thus to save the contents at the cost of the case – and like a thorough Briton, as

he always was, he determined not to get the worst of it. Several opportunities for reprisal had been allowed to escape him; when, soon after Bill Chumps went to Oxford, there came among us, and excited our principles, a contested election for Marylebone. By means of their noble organization, the Liberals knew, from the outset, that the battle of freedom was sure to be won; or, as our people put it, rank bribery and corruption, truckling and swilling would defeat the right. Nevertheless, a just hope was entertained, on both sides, of a very lively contest, and a fair occasion (without legal intervention) for sounding the capacity of an adversary's head. My father was flying a big blue flag, which we could see from the *Partheneion*, with "Church and State for ever" on it; and Mr. John Windsor, and Chumps Esquire – as we called the great butcher in respect of his son – and "*The Best End of the Scrag*," all had the same; and only a man who knocked horses on the head durst hang out the red rag, up our Lane.

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

The beginning of their enterprise was most glorious; nothing could stand before them. They broke all the glass that had a blue flag near it, and they knocked down every man who had got blue eyes. The premises of Mr. Chumps were sacked; his legs of mutton walked off, as if they were alive, and his salt beef was stuck on poles, even bigger than the skewers he weighed it out with; every drop in the cellars of the Conservative Hotel ran uphill inside a big Radical, and Mr. John Windsor lost soap enough pretty nearly to clean half the Liberals. However, he contrived to get over a back wall, together with his wife and daughter Polly – Jack was luckily at the *Partheneion*, and the other four gone to see their Aunt, with old *Fangs* to protect them from the Liberals – and by taking an in-and-out way through the cinders, the three arrived safely at our back door, without breath enough to blow out one of their own dips.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Capital! I call this first-rate stoking;" exclaimed my father, as he stopped to breathe. "Now you understand the hose, John? It is only three-inch pipe, and therefore as handy as a walking-stick. You put your nozzle upon that trestle, commanding the back doors, while I keep ready for the time they have broken the front gate down. We have got a big vat of hot stuff to draw from; but I don't think they'll want half of it."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Not only Grimes, but a great many others would have liked to get out of the way at this; but the bulk of the tumult behind shoved on, and the heads, that were fain to hang back, got jammed up in front against the smash, and then shot over. Father just waited, till the chimney-sweep, a termagant of the highest rank, was hurra-ing, and waving a soot-brush, – and then he let go hot candles at them. In a long white column, flew the scalding fluid, spreading, like a sheaf, when it met their faces, and

coating every man of them with poisonous gray froth. No man could swear, for his mouth was bunged up; and no man could strike, for his arms were stuck to him, with a weight of deposit, like a stalactite. Good stearine it was, of the value of at least three halfpence a pound, in the unrefined state; and it went inside their shirts, and stung like hornets, and settled into every cracked place of the skin, and made a man tight in his linings. And to add to their grief, such a steam arose among them – not to mention something else beginning with same letters – that the slits of any eyes, that were left half open, were as useless as in a thick London fog.

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

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

CHAPTER VIII. FOR CHANGE OF AIR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Mr. Upmore!" exclaimed Mrs. Windsor, whose manner, we were told, was more aristocratic than anything on our side of King's Cross; "Mr. Upmore, with all your opportunities, is it possible that you have not ever felt it your very first duty, to take your dear wife, and your Tommy, to the sea? Whatever should we do, without the sea? A great part of our commerce comes over it, and my Johnny can very nearly swim! Dear Mrs. Upmore, you should not lose a minute, in taking your darling boy to the sea. It seems to be considered so essential now, that all young persons should be taught to swim."

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Don't be so hot, my dear. I assure you, Bubbly, that she means it for the moment; but it goes in two seconds, like a spurt of steam. Now, I happen to know a very nice little place, on the east coast, Norfolk or Suffolk, I believe, for I never can carry all the counties in my head. Happystowe-on-Sea is the name of it; none of your blessed sewers there. I know a man who boils there, twice a week; he would let you in as a visitor, of course, and you would get the nourishment of his air. Barlow his name is, Billy Barlow; a rising man in compos, and cocoa; he has found a way to make one out of

the other, and both of them out of old shoes, I believe; and I thought of running down to him, to get a wrinkle; but Mrs. W. seemed to think there was something *infra dig* in it."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER IX.

THALATTA!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

His thankful spirit had not yet exhausted the joys of freedom from the Railway box; and perhaps – though it is not for me to say it – the Happystowe air was more mercurial than that of our works,

which confined his meditations too persistently to one theme – bone. But let that pass; it is quite impossible to explain everything that happens; all I know is that *Grip* set off from the porch of the *Twentifold Arms Hotel*, with a flourish, and a scurry, and a gambol of delight. With a gentle breeze moving behind me, I started, to catch him and get the first sight of the sea; and then, down a steep path, we came round the corner of what must have been a live rock, and behold —

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

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

People, who have never been up like this, might suppose, at first sight, that I was terrified; especially at being carried out to sea, as my first acquaintance with that great space. But without laying claim to any share of courage, I may state, as a simple matter of fact, that I happened to feel no fear whatever. My father, (as truthful a man as ever lived, and from whom I inherit that quality) had said that I never was born to be drowned; and if I thought at all (which I disremember doing) that alone would have reassured me. At any rate, I looked around, as calmly as if I were sitting down to dinner; but with this disadvantage, that I could not keep my gaze very firmly fixed upon anything, because of the rotation of my body. For instance, I was able to shout down to *Grip* (who was howling most mournfully in the gap, and making sad jumps to come after me) that I was all right, and would come back, by and by; but before I could judge whether he was consoled, my eyes were on a ship a long way out. If there had been much wind, perhaps it would have proved a ticklish thing for me; but the air was calm, and full of yellow light, the sea was below me, like a floor of silver, the sky of a pure soft blue, wherever the sun did not interfere with it; and nothing on any side suggested danger, or uneasiness.

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

But, just as I was learning with my hands and feet, and some guidance of the silken summer tunic at my hips, – what did I discover but a great long gun, taken up by a man, from a boat upon the beach, and then being pointed with a careful aim at me! I endeavoured to scream out – "I am Tommy; only Tommy Upmore going for a fly; if you shoot me, you will be hanged for murder!" – but I give you my word that my fright was so great, that no sound of any use would come out of my mouth. Old

Rum's cane was quite a joke, compared to this. Every atom of my levity turned to lead, my hands fell to my sides, and my feet struck together, and I dropped, like a well-bucket, when the rope is broken.

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

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

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

But while I was balancing myself like this, after stepping from the sail that was spread for me, a beautiful lady, who had been sitting on a fur, and looking at me with surprise and interest, arose and came towards me, with some little doubt enlarging the brightness of her large bright eyes.

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

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

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

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

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

"These are my children," she said, as I followed her down the planks, without a word; "it was Laura, who saw you first up in the air, and Roly who ordered the men to row over, when that wicked young man put his gun up. We thought it was some new kind of bird. And so you are – a boy bird!"

Roly, and Laura, let me introduce you to this young gentleman. There is nothing about him to be afraid of, although he has come down from the clouds, or rather from the clear sky, this beautiful evening. He declares that he can be scientifically explained; and when that can be done, there is nothing more to say. Roly has never known what fear is, ever since he cut his teeth."

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

He came up, and took my hand, as if he would squeeze any cloudiness out of me; and nothing but the pinches I had often had at school, enabled me to bear it without a squeak. He had been at the helm, as they call it, to direct the boat the right way to catch me; and although he was greatly surprised, he concluded – as all Englishmen do upon such occasions – that the time to explain things would ensue, after they had been dealt with.

CHAPTER X. THE NEW ADMIRAL

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

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

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

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

"Dinner indeed! Don't think twice of your dinner;" cried mother from the window, in great excitement, "here is a thing that you never saw before, and will never see again, if you live to be a hundred. Our Tommy in a flag, and all the sailors in the kingdom, taking off their hats, and cheering him, and the dear little poppet as modest as ever, exactly like an Angel! And a beautiful lady, you can see by the look that all the place belongs to her – you can tell at a glance who she is, of course – Bucephalus, how slow you are!"

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

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

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

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

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

"Oh dear, he has spoiled his white ducks with tar, and *Grip* is in a dreadful mess of wet, and the sailors want to hoist him too, if he would only let them! I see what it is – how stupid of me! Tommy has been flying all over the sea, and *Grip* has been swimming after him! Oh, Bucephalus, how can you eat your dinner? Is this a proper time, for you to be devouring dinner?"

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

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

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

It is a very clumsy thing for me to find fault with the behaviour of my parents, and I am not prepared to do so now. There may have been fifty reasons, clear to people much wiser than myself; but certainly I was amazed, and angry, when Mrs. Roaker came back to say, that the lady from London was so fatigued, with the dreadful effects of her journey, that she begged to thank her ladyship most warmly, for very great kindness to her dear son; but felt quite unequal to an interview with her.

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

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

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

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

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

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

I had told her that my name was "flying Tommy;" and she was much pleased to hear it, because it showed, that the Happystowe air was not to blame, for my adventure. Then Sir Roland came up, and took my hand, and said that he hoped I would take him for a fly; and then, the most beautiful child I had ever set eyes on, stole up shyly, and put her little hand in mine, and left me to say good-bye to her.

On the following day, I felt as heavy as *Grip* (who weighed half a pound for every ounce that a human being of his size would weigh), and my father and my mother agreed, from different points of view, about me, – that I must be kept indoors, and fed, and put at my books, to steady me. We had brought some Greek in the bottom of a box, which father considered great nonsense, though it might be very good for children. And he told me to find out the Greek for soap, and spermaceti,

and steam-engine, and write them down, so that he could read them; which I entirely failed to do. Meanwhile he set off, with his Admiral's coat, to inspect the sea and the shipping, and Mr. Barlow's boiling premises.

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

My father replied, that as concerned himself there need be no difficulty whatever, because as soon as he had done his breakfast, his only preparation was to smoke a pipe; but he did not believe that it was possible for mother, (who had spent all Saturday in the village-shops, because she had come in such hurry from home, that she had brought nothing fit to be seen in) to have all her toggery spick-and-span, and her hair done up to the nines, so early. But, if only to show him how little he knew, my mother was ready before he was; and father declared that she ruined his sleep, having got up to see the sun rise upon the sea, and stopped up to see herself grow brighter, and brighter, in the looking-glass. Dear mother had a great mind not to go to church, with such a wicked story ringing in her ears; until father told her that she looked stunning, and was fit to be put on a transparent lid – the lid of a box of transparent soap.

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

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

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

From a joke, Mr. Windsor's idea had grown into a great and solid fact. Mrs. Roaker, and most of the Happystowe people, had made up their minds by this time, that my father was "Admiral Upmore." He was too honest, and plain a man, to encourage this mistake for a moment, and, whenever he got the chance, declared most stoutly, that he was no Admiral. The public, however, would not believe him, having met with some indications in commercial dealings with him, that he prized the royal effigy; from which it was clear, what his motive was in desiring to disguise his rank. And the Boots of the *Twentifold Arms* could swear that he saw *Admiral* printed, on the back of the label of a hairy trunk, which had only B. U. on the front of it. And so he did, to a certain extent; for mother had taken an advertising card beginning with *Admirable*, and cut it across, and put father's initials on the other side.

"They may call me what they like," my father said, when tired of contradiction, "so long as they don't charge me for it. *Admiral* Upmore serves my turn, uncommonly well, for two things. Billy Barlow would lock his gate, if he knew that I am only Boiler Upmore; and I am finding out some fine things there. And again, if any lawyer comes sneaking after my heels, with that chummy's process,

he'll find his mistake in the visitor's list. But, Tommy, you'll catch it, if you let out a word of this in Maiden Lane. Why, I never should hear the last of it!"

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

But alas, how fate does ring her changes with articulate-speaking mortals – the triumph of the chime, the hesitation of the back-stroke, and the toll of disappointment! Ere ever the bells in the tower had ceased, and the organ taken up the tale, dear mother was a pensive-hearted female, and her feathers out of plume. For in coming up the aisle, she had whispered to the buxom pew-opener; "Lady Towers-Twentifold has been seeking to make my acquaintance. Can we sit anywhere near her pew?"

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.