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CHAPTER INTRODUCTORY

In the Michaelmas term after leaving school, Tom Brown received a summons from the authorities, and went up to matriculate at St. Ambrose's College, Oxford, He presented himself at the college one afternoon, and was examined by one of the tutors, who carried him, and several other youths in like predicament, up to the Senate House the next morning. Here they went through the usual forms of subscribing to the articles, and otherwise testifying their loyalty to the established order of things, without much thought perhaps, but in very good faith nevertheless. Having completed the ceremony, by paying his fees, our hero hurried back home, without making any stay in Oxford. He had often passed through it, so that the city had not the charm of novelty for him, and he was anxious to get home; where, as he had never spent an autumn away from school till now, for the first time in his life he was having his fill of hunting and shooting.

He had left school in June, and did not go up to reside at Oxford till the end of the following January. Seven good months; during a part of which he had indeed read for four hours or so

a week with the curate of the parish, but the residue had been exclusively devoted to cricket and field sports. Now, admirable as these institutions are, and beneficial as is their influence on the youth of Britain, it is possible for a youngster to get too much of them. So it had fallen out with our hero. He was a better horseman and shot, but the total relaxation of all the healthy discipline of school, the regular hours and regular work to which he had been used for so many years, had certainly thrown him back in other ways. The whole man had not grown; so that we must not be surprised to find him quite as boyish, now that we fall in with him again, marching down to St. Ambrose's with a porter wheeling his luggage after him on a truck as when we left him at the end of his school career.

Tom was in truth beginning to feel that it was high time for him to be getting to regular work again of some sort. A landing place is a famous thing, but it is only enjoyable for a time by any mortal who deserves one at all. So it was with a feeling of unmixed pleasure that he turned in at the St. Ambrose gates, and inquired of the porter what rooms had been allotted to him within those venerable walls.

While the porter consulted his list, the great college sundial, over the lodge, which had lately been renovated, caught Tom's eye. The motto underneath, *"Pereunt et imputantur,"* stood out, proud of its new gilding, in the bright afternoon sun of a frosty January day: which motto was raising sundry thoughts in his brain, when the porter came upon the right place in his list, and

directed him to the end of his journey: No. 5 staircase, second quadrangle, three pair back. In which new home we shall leave him to install himself, while we endeavor to give the reader some notion of the college itself.

CHAPTER I
ST. AMBROSE'S COLLEGE

St. Ambrose's College was a moderate-sized one. There might have been some seventy or eighty undergraduates in residence, when our hero appeared there as a freshman. Of these, unfortunately for the college, there were a very large proportion of the gentleman-commoners; enough, in fact, with the other men whom they drew round them, and who lived pretty much as they did, to form the largest and leading set in the college. So the college was decidedly fast.

The chief characteristic of this set was the most reckless extravagance of every kind. London wine merchants furnished them with liqueurs at a guinea a bottle and wine at five guineas a dozen; Oxford and London tailors vied with one another in providing them with unheard-of quantities of the most gorgeous clothing. They drove tandems in all directions, scattering their ample allowances, which they treated as pocket money, about roadside inns and Oxford taverns with open hand, and "going tick" for everything which could by possibility be booked. Their cigars cost two guineas a pound; their furniture was the best that could be bought; pine-apples, forced fruit, and the most rare preserves figured at their wine parties; they hunted, rode steeple-chases by day, played billiards until the gates closed, and then

were ready for *vingt-et-une*, unlimited loo, and hot drink in their own rooms, as long as anyone could be got to sit up and play.

The fast set then swamped, and gave the tone to the college; at which fact no persons were more astonished and horrified than the authorities of St. Ambrose.

That they of all bodies in the world should be fairly run away with by a set of reckless, loose young spendthrifts, was indeed a melancholy and unprecedented fact; for the body of fellows of St. Ambrose was as distinguished for learning, morality and respectability as any in the University. The foundation was not, indeed, actually an open one. Oriel at that time alone enjoyed this distinction; but there were a large number of open fellowships, and the income of the college was large, and the livings belonging to it numerous; so that the best men from other colleges were constantly coming in. Some of these of a former generation had been eminently successful in their management of the college. The St. Ambrose undergraduates at one time had carried off almost all the university prizes, and filled the class lists, while maintaining at the same time the highest character for manliness and gentlemanly conduct. This had lasted long enough to establish the fame of the college, and great lords and statesmen had sent their sons there; head-masters had struggled to get the names of their best pupils on the books; in short, everyone who had a son, ward, or pupil, whom he wanted to push forward in the world – who was meant to cut a figure, and take the lead among men, left no stone unturned to get him into St. Ambrose's;

and thought the first, and a very long step gained when he had succeeded.

But the governing bodies of colleges are always on the change, and, in the course of things men of other ideas came to rule at St. Ambrose – shrewd men of the world; men of business, some of them, with good ideas of making the most of their advantages; who said, "Go to; why should we not make the public pay for the great benefits we confer on them? Have we not the very best article in the educational market to supply – almost a monopoly of it – and shall we not get the highest price for it?" So by degrees they altered many things in the college. In the first place, under their auspices, gentlemen-commoners increased and multiplied; in fact, the eldest sons of baronets, even squires, were scarcely admitted on any other footing. As these young gentlemen paid double fees to the college, and had great expectations of all sorts, it could not be expected that they should be subject to quite the same discipline as the common run of men, who would have to make their own way in the world. So the rules as to attendance at chapel and lectures, though nominally the same for them as for commoners, were in practice relaxed in their favour; and, that they might find all things suitable to persons in their position, the kitchen and buttery were worked up to a high state of perfection, and St. Ambrose, from having been one of the most reasonable, had come to be about the most expensive college in the university. These changes worked as their promoters probably desired that they should work, and the

college was full of rich men, and commanded in the university the sort of respect which riches bring with them. But the old reputation, though still strong out of doors, was beginning sadly to wane within the university precincts. Fewer and fewer of the St. Ambrose men appeared in the class lists, or amongst the prize-men. They no longer led the debates at the Union; the boat lost place after place on the river; the eleven got beaten in all their matches. The inaugurators of these changes had passed away in their turn, and at last a reaction had commenced. The fellows recently elected, and who were in residence at the time we write of, were for the most part men of great attainments, all of them men who had taken very high honors. The electors naturally enough had chosen them as the most likely persons to restore, as tutors, the golden days of the college; and they had been careful in the selection to confine themselves to very quiet and studious men, such as were likely to remain up at Oxford, passing over men of more popular manners and active spirits, who would be sure to flit soon into the world, and be of little more service to St. Ambrose.

But these were not the men to get any hold on the fast set who were now in the ascendant. It was not in the nature of things that they should understand each other; in fact, they were hopelessly at war, and the college was getting more and more out of gear in consequence.

What they could do, however, they were doing; and under their fostering care were growing up a small set, including most of

the scholars, who were likely, as far as they were concerned, to retrieve the college character of the schools. But they were too much like their tutors, men who did little else but read. They neither wished for, nor were likely to gain, the slightest influence on the fast set. The best men amongst them, too, were diligent readers of the *Tracts for the Times*, and followers of the able leaders of the High-church party, which was then a growing one; and this led them also to form such friendships as they made amongst out-college men of their own way of thinking-with high churchmen, rather than St. Ambrose men. So they lived very much to themselves, and scarcely interfered with the dominant party.

Lastly, there was the boating set, which was beginning to revive in the college, partly from the natural disgust of any body of young Englishmen, at finding themselves distanced in an exercise requiring strength and pluck, and partly from the fact, that the captain for the time being was one of the best oars in the University boat, and also a deservedly popular character. He was now in his third year of residence, had won the pair-oar race, and had pulled seven in the great yearly match with Cambridge, and by constant hard work had managed to carry the St. Ambrose boat up to the fifth place on the river. He will be introduced to you, gentle reader, when the proper time comes; at present, we are only concerned with a bird's-eye view of the college, that you may feel more or less at home in it. The boating set was not so separate or marked as the reading set, melting on one side into,

and keeping up more or less connexion with, the fast set, and also commanding a sort of half allegiance from most of the men who belonged to neither of the other sets. The minor divisions, of which of course there were many, need not be particularized, as the above general classification will be enough for the purposes of this history.

Our hero, on leaving school, having bound himself solemnly to write all his doings and thoughts to the friend whom he had left behind him: distance and separation were to make no difference whatever in their friendship. This compact had been made on one of their last evenings at Rugby. They were sitting together in the six-form room, Tom splicing the handle of a favourite cricket bat, and Arthur reading a volume of Raleigh's works. The Doctor had lately been alluding to the "History of the World," and had excited the curiosity of the active-minded amongst his pupils about the great navigator, statesman, soldier, author, and fine gentleman. So Raleigh's works were seized on by various voracious young readers, and carried out of the school library; and Arthur was now deep in a volume of the "Miscellanies," curled up on a corner of the sofa. Presently, Tom heard something between a groan and a protest, and, looking up, demanded explanations; in answer to which, Arthur, in a voice half furious and half fearful, read out: —

"And be sure of this, thou shalt never find a friend in thy young years whose conditions and qualities will please thee after thou comest to more discretion and judgment; and then all thou

givest is lost, and all wherein thou shalt trust such a one will be discovered."

"You don't mean that's Raleigh's?"

"Yes – here it is, in his first letter to his son."

"What a cold-blooded old Philistine," said Tom.

"But it can't be true, do you think?" said Arthur.

And in short, after some personal reflections on Sir Walter, they then and there resolved that, so far as they were concerned, it was not, could not, and should not be true, that they would remain faithful, the same to each other; and the greatest friends in the world, through I know not what separations, trials, and catastrophes. And for the better insuring this result, a correspondence, regular as the recurring months, was to be maintained. It had already lasted through the long vacation and up to Christmas without sensibly dragging, though Tom's letters had been something of the shortest in November, when he had lots of shooting, and two days a week with the hounds. Now, however, having fairly got to Oxford, he determined to make up for all short-comings. His first letter from college, taken in connexion with the previous sketch of the place, will probably accomplish the work of introduction better than any detailed account by a third party; and it is therefore given here verbatim: —

"St. Ambrose, Oxford,

"February, 184-

"MY DEAR GEORDIE,

"According to promise, I write to tell you how I get on up here, and what sort of a place Oxford is. Of course, I don't know much about it yet, having only been up some weeks, but you shall have my first impressions.

"Well, first and foremost it's an awfully idle place; at any rate for us freshmen. Fancy now. I am in twelve lectures a week of an hour each – Greek Testament, first book of Herodotus, second AEneid, and first book of Euclid! There's a treat! Two hours a day; all over by twelve, or one at latest, and no extra work at all, in the shape of copies of verses, themes, or other exercises.

"I think sometimes I'm back in the lower fifth; for we don't get through more than we used to do there; and if you were to hear the men construe, it would make your hair stand on end. Where on earth can they have come from? Unless they blunder on purpose, as I often think. Of course, I never look at a lecture before I go in, I know it all nearly by heart, so it would be sheer waste of time. I hope I shall take to reading something or other by myself; but you know I never was much of a hand at sapping, and, for the present, the light work suits me well enough, for there's plenty to see and learn about in this place.

"We keep very gentlemanly hours. Chapel every morning at eight, and evening at seven. You must attend once a day, and twice on Sundays – at least, that's the rule of our college – and be in gates by twelve o'clock at night. Besides which, if you're a decently steady fellow, you ought to dine in hall perhaps four days a week. Hall is at five o'clock. And now you have the sum

total. All the rest of your time you may just do what you like with.

"So much for our work and hours. Now for the place. Well, it's a grand old place, certainly; and I dare say, if a fellow goes straight in it, and gets creditably through his three years, he may end by loving it as much as we do the old school-house and quadrangle at Rugby. Our college is a fair specimen: a venerable old front of crumbling stone fronting the street, into which two or three other colleges look also. Over the gateway is a large room, where the college examinations go on, when there are any; and, as you enter, you pass the porters lodge, where resides our janitor, a bustling little man, with a pot belly, whose business it is to put down the time at which the men come in at night, and to keep all discommonsed tradesmen, stray dogs, and bad characters generally, out of the college.

"The large quadrangle into which you come first, is bigger than ours at Rugby, and a much more solemn and sleepy sort of a place, with its gables and old mullioned windows. One side is occupied by the hall and chapel; the principal's house takes up half another side; and the rest is divided into staircases, on each of which are six or eight sets of rooms, inhabited by us undergraduates, and here and there a tutor or fellow dropped down amongst us (in the first-floor rooms, of course), not exactly to keep order, but to act as a sort of ballast. This quadrangle is the show part of the college, and is generally respectable and quiet, which is a good deal more than can be said for the inner quadrangle, which you get at through a passage leading out of the

other. The rooms ain't half so large or good in the inner quad; and here's where all we freshmen live, besides a lot of the older undergraduates who don't care to change their rooms. Only one tutor has rooms here; and I should think, if he's a reading man, it won't be long before he clears out; for all sorts of high jinks go on on the grass-plot, and the row on the staircases is often as bad, and not half so respectable, as it used to be in the middle passage in the last week of the half-year.

"My rooms are what they call garrets, right up in the roof, with a commanding view of the college tiles and chimney pots, and of houses at the back. No end of cats, both college Toms and strangers, haunt the neighbourhood, and I am rapidly learning cat-talking from them; but I'm not going to stand it – I don't want to know cat-talk. The college Toms are protected by the statutes, I believe; but I'm going to buy an air-gun for the benefit of the strangers. My rooms are pleasant enough, at the top of the kitchen staircase, and separated from all mankind by a great, iron-clamped, outer door, my oak, which I sport when I go out or want to be quiet; sitting room eighteen by twelve, bedroom twelve by eight, and a little cupboard for the scout.

"Ah, Geordie, the scout is an institution! Fancy me waited upon and valeted by a stout party in black of quiet, gentlemanly manners, like the benevolent father in a comedy. He takes the deepest interest in all my possessions and proceedings, and is evidently used to good society, to judge by the amount of crockery and glass, wines, liquors, and grocery, which he thinks

indispensable for my due establishment. He has also been good enough to recommend to me many tradesmen who are ready to supply these articles in any quantities; each of whom has been here already a dozen times, cap in hand, and vowing that it is quite immaterial when I pay-which is very kind of them; but, with the highest respect for friend Perkins (my scout) and his obliging friends, I shall make some enquiries before "letting in" with any of them. He waits on me in hall, where we go in full fig of cap and gown at five, and get very good dinners, and cheap enough. It is rather a fine old room, with a good, arched, black oak ceiling and high panelling, hung round with pictures of old swells, bishops and lords chiefly, who have endowed the college in some way, or at least have fed here in times gone by, and for whom, *"caeterisque benefactoribus nostris,"* we daily give thanks in a long Latin grace, which one of the undergraduates (I think it must be) goes and rattles out at the end of the high table, and then comes down again from the dais to his own place. No one feeds at the high table except the dons and the gentlemen-commoners, who are undergraduates in velvet caps and silk gowns. Why they wear these instead of cloth and serge I haven't yet made out, I believe it is because they pay double fees; but they seem uncommonly wretched up at the high table, and I should think would sooner pay double to come to the other end of the hall.

"The chapel is a quaint little place, about the size of the chancel of Lutterworth Church. It just holds us all comfortably. The attendance is regular enough, but I don't think the men care

about it a bit in general. Several I can see bring in Euclids, and other lecture books, and the service is gone through at a great pace. I couldn't think at first why some of the men seemed so uncomfortable and stiff about the legs at morning service, but I find that they are the hunting set, and come in with pea-coats over their pinks, and trousers over their leather breeches and top-boots; which accounts for it. There are a few others who seem very devout, and bow a good deal, and turn towards the altar at different parts of the service. These are of the Oxford High-church school, I believe; but I shall soon find out more about them. On the whole I feel less at home at present, I am sorry to say, in the chapel, than anywhere else.

"I was very near forgetting a great institution of the college, which is the buttery-hatch, just opposite the hall-door. Here abides the fat old butler (all the servants at St. Ambrose's are portly), and serves out limited bread, butter, and cheese, and unlimited beer brewed by himself, for an hour in the morning, at noon, and again at supper-time. Your scout always fetches you a pint or so on each occasion in case you should want it, and if you don't, it falls to him; but I can't say that my fellow gets much, for I am naturally a thirsty soul, and cannot often resist the malt myself, coming up as it does, fresh and cool, in one of the silver tankards, of which we seem to have an endless supply.

"I spent a day or two in the first week, before I got shaken down into my place here, in going round and seeing the other colleges, and finding out what great men had been at each (one

got a taste for that sort of work from the Doctor, and I'd nothing else to do). Well, I never was more interested; fancy ferreting out Wycliffe, the Black Prince, our friend Sir Walter Raleigh, Pym, Hampden, Laud, Ireton, Butler, and Addison, in one afternoon. I walked about two inches taller in my trencher cap after it. Perhaps I may be going to make dear friends with some fellow who will change the history of England. Why shouldn't I? There must have been freshmen once who were chums of Wycliffe of Queen's, or Raleigh of Oriel. I mooned up and down the High-street, staring at all the young faces in caps, and wondering which of them would turn out great generals, or statesmen, or poets. Some of them will, of course, for there must be a dozen at least, I should think, in every generation of undergraduates, who will have a good deal to say to the ruling and guiding of the British nation before they die.

"But, after all, the river is the feature of Oxford, to my mind; a glorious stream, not five minutes' walk from the colleges, broad enough in most places for three boats to row abreast. I expect I will take to boating furiously: I have been down the river three or four times already with some other freshmen, and it is glorious exercise; that I can see, though we bungle and cut crabs desperately at present.

"Here's a long yarn I'm spinning for you; and I dare say after all you'll say it tells you nothing, and you'd rather have twenty lines about the men, and what they're thinking about and the meaning, and the inner life of the place, and all that. Patience, patience! I

don't know anything about it myself yet, and have had only time to look at the shell, which is a very handsome and stately affair; you shall have the kernel, if I ever get at it, in due time.

"And now write me a long letter directly, and tell me about the Doctor, and who are in the Sixth, and how the house goes on, and what sort of an eleven there'll be, and what you are doing and thinking about. Come up here try for a scholarship; I'll take you in and show you the lions. Remember me to old friends. – Ever your affectionately,

T. B."

CHAPTER II
A ROW ON THE RIVER

Within a day or two of the penning of this celebrated epistle, which created quite a sensation in the sixth-form room as it went the round after tea, Tom realized one of the objects of his young Oxford ambition, and succeeded in embarking on the river in a skiff by himself, with such results as are now described. He had already been down several times in pair-oar and four-oar boats, with an old oar to pull stroke, and another to steer and coach the young idea, but he was not satisfied with these essays. He could not believe that he was such a bad oar as the old hands' made him out to be, and thought that it must be the fault of the other freshmen who were learning with him that the boat made so little way and rolled so much. He had been such a proficient in all the Rugby games, that he couldn't realize the fact of his unreadiness in a boat. Pulling looked a simple thing enough – much easier than tennis; and he had made a capital start at the latter game, and been highly complimented by the marker after his first hour in the little court. He forgot that cricket and fives are capital training for tennis, but that rowing is a speciality, of the rudiments of which he was wholly ignorant. And so, in full confidence that, if he could only have a turn or two alone, he should not only satisfy himself, but everybody else, that he was

a heaven-born oar, he refused all offers of companionship, and started on the afternoon of a fine February day down to the boats for his trial trip. He had watched his regular companions well out of college, and gave them enough start to make sure that they would be off before he himself could arrive at St. Ambrose's dressing room at Hall's, and chuckled, as he came within sight of the river, to see the freshmen's boat in which he generally performed, go plunging away past the University barge, keeping three different times with four oars, and otherwise demeaning itself so as to become an object of mirthful admiration to all beholders.

Tom was punted across to Hall's in a state of great content, which increased when, in answer to his casual inquiry, the managing man informed him that not a man of his college was about the place. So he ordered a skiff with as much dignity and coolness as he could command, and hastened up stairs to dress. He appeared again, carrying his boating coat and cap. They were quite new, so he would not wear them; nothing about him should betray the freshman on this day if he could help it.

"Is my skiff ready?"

"All right, sir; this way, sir;" said the manager, conducting him to a good, safe-looking craft. "Any gentleman going to steer, sir?"

"No" said Tom, superciliously; "You may take out the rudder."

"Going quite alone, sir? Better take one of our boys – find you a very light one. Here, Bill!" – and he turned to summons a

juvenile waterman to take charge of our hero.

"Take out the rudder, do you hear?" interrupted Tom. "I won't have a steerer."

"Well, sir, as you please," said the manager, proceeding to remove the degrading appendage. "The river's rather high, please to remember, sir. You must mind the mill stream at Iffley Lock. I suppose you can swim?"

"Yes, of course," said Tom, settling himself on his cushion.

"Now, shove her off."

The next moment he was well out in the stream, and left to his own resources. He got his sculls out successfully enough, and, though feeling by no means easy on his seat, proceeded to pull very deliberately past the barges, stopping his sculls in the air to feather accurately, in the hopes of deceiving spectators into the belief that he was an old hand just going out for a gentle paddle. The manager watched him for a minute, and turned to his work with an aspiration that he might not come to grief.

But no thought of grief was on Tom's mind as he dropped gently down, impatient for the time when he should pass the mouth of the Cherwell, and so, having no longer critical eyes to fear, might put out his whole strength, and give himself at least if not the world, assurance of a waterman.

The day was a very fine one, a bright sun shining, and a nice fresh breeze blowing across the stream, but not enough to ruffle the water seriously. Some heavy storms up Gloucestershire way had cleared the air, and swollen the stream at the same time;

in fact, the river was as full as it could be without overflowing its banks – a state in which, of all others, it is the least safe for boating experiments. Fortunately, in those days there were no outriggers. Even the racing skiffs were comparatively safe craft, and would now be characterized as tubs; while the real tubs (in one of the safest of which the prudent manager had embarked our hero) were of such build that it required considerable ingenuity actually to upset them.

If any ordinary amount of bungling could have done it, Tom's voyage would have terminated within a hundred yards of the Cherwell. While he had been sitting quiet and merely paddling, and almost letting the stream carry him down, the boat had trimmed well enough; but now, taking a long breath, he leaned forward, and dug his sculls into the water, pulling them through with all his strength. The consequence of this feat was that the handles of the sculls came into violent collision in the middle of the boat, the knuckles of his right hand were barked, his left scull unshipped, and the head of his skiff almost blown round by the wind before he could restore order on board.

"Never mind; try again," thought be, after the first sensation of disgust had passed off, and a glance at the shore showed him that there were no witnesses. "Of course, I forgot one hand must go over the other. It might have happened to anyone. Let me see, which hand shall I keep uppermost; the left, that's the weakest." And away he went again, keeping his newly-acquired fact painfully in mind, and so avoiding further collision

amidships for four or five strokes. But, as in other sciences, the giving of undue prominence to one fact brings others inexorably on the head of the student to avenge his neglect of them, so it happened with Tom in his practical study of the science of rowing that by thinking of his hands he forgot his seat, and the necessity of trimming properly. Whereupon the old tub began to rock fearfully, and the next moment, he missed the water altogether with his right scull, and subsided backwards, not without struggles, into the bottom of the boat; while the half stroke which he had pulled with his left hand sent her head well into the bank.

Tom picked himself up, and settled himself on his bench again, a sadder and wiser man, as the truth began to dawn upon him that pulling, especially sculling, does not, like reading and writing, come by nature. However, he addressed himself manfully to his task; savage indeed, and longing to drive a hole in the bottom of the old tub, but as resolved as ever to get to Sandford and back before hall time, or perish in the attempt.

He shoved himself off the bank, and warned by his last mishap, got out into mid stream, and there, moderating his ardor, and contenting himself with a slow and steady stroke, was progressing satisfactorily, and beginning to recover his temper, when a loud shout startled him; and, looking over his shoulder at the imminent risk of an upset, he beheld the fast sailor the Dart, close hauled on a wind, and almost aboard of him. Utterly ignorant of what was the right thing to do, he held on his course,

and passed close under the bows of the miniature cutter, the steersman having jammed his helm hard down, shaking her in the wind, to prevent running over the skiff, and solacing himself with pouring maledictions on Tom and his craft, in which the man who had hold of the sheets, and the third, who was lounging in the bows, heartily joined. Tom was out of ear-shot before he had collected vituperation enough to hurl back at them, and was, moreover, already in the difficult navigation of the Gut, where, notwithstanding all his efforts, he again ran aground; but, with this exception, he arrived without other mishap at Iffley, where he lay on his sculls with much satisfaction, and shouted, "Lock – lock!"

The lock-keeper appeared to the summons, but instead of opening the gates seized a long boat-hook, and rushed towards our hero, calling upon him to mind the mill-stream, and pull his right-hand scull; notwithstanding which warning, Tom was within an ace of drifting past the entrance to the lock, in which case assuredly his boat, if not he, had never returned whole. However, the lock-keeper managed to catch the stern of his skiff with the boat-hook, and drag him back into the proper channel, and then opened the lock-gates for him. Tom congratulated himself as he entered the lock that there were no other boats going through with him; but his evil star was in the ascendant, and all things, animate and inanimate, seemed to be leagued together to humiliate him. As the water began to fall rapidly, he lost his hold of the chain and the tub instantly drifted across the lock,

and was in imminent danger of sticking and breaking her back, when the lock-keeper again came to the rescue with his boat-hook and, guessing the state of the case, did not quit him until he had safely shoved him and his boat well out into the pool below, with an exhortation to mind and go outside of the barge which was coming up.

Tom started on the latter half of his outward voyage with the sort of look which Cato must have worn when he elected the losing side, and all the gods went over to the winning one. But his previous struggles had not been thrown away, and he managed to keep the right side of the barge, turn the corner without going around, and zigzag down Kennington reach, slowly indeed, but with much labor, but at any rate safely. Rejoicing in his feat, he stopped at the island, and recreated himself with a glass of beer, looking now hopefully towards Sandford, which lay within easy distance, now upwards again along the reach which he had just overcome, and solacing himself with the remembrance of a dictum, which he had heard from a great authority, that it was always easier to steer up stream than down, from which he argued that the worst part of his trial trip was now over.

Presently he saw a skiff turn the corner at the top of the Kennington reach, and, resolving in his mind to get to Sandford before the new comer, paid for his beer, and betook himself again to his tub. He got pretty well off, and, the island shutting out his unconscious rival from his view, worked away at first under the pleasing delusion that he was holding his own. But he

was soon undeceived, for in monstrously short time the pursuing skiff showed around the corner and bore down on him. He never relaxed his efforts, but could not help watching the enemy as he came up with him hand over hand, and envying the perfect ease with which he seemed to be pulling his long steady stroke and the precision with which he steered, scarcely ever casting a look over his shoulder. He was hugging the Berkshire side himself, as the other skiff passed him, and thought he heard the sculler say something about keeping out, and minding the small lasher; but the noise of the waters and his own desperate efforts prevented his heeding, or, indeed, hearing the warning plainly. In another minute, however, he heard plainly enough most energetic shouts behind him and, turning his head over his right shoulder, saw the man who had just passed him backing his skiff rapidly up stream towards him. The next moment he felt the bows of his boat whirl round, the old tub grounded for a moment, and then, turning over on her side, shot him out on to the planking of the steep descent into the small lasher. He grasped at the boards, but they were too slippery to hold, and the rush of water was too strong for him, and rolling him over and over like a piece of driftwood, plunged him into the pool below.

After the first moment of astonishment and fright was over, Tom left himself to the stream, holding his breath hard, and paddling gently with his hands, feeling sure that, if he could only hold on, he should come to the surface sooner or later; which accordingly happened after a somewhat lengthy submersion.

His first impulse on rising to the surface, after catching his breath, was to strike out for the shore, but, in the act of doing so, he caught sight of the other skiff coming stern foremost down the decent after him, and he trod the water and drew in his breath to watch. Down she came, as straight as an arrow, into the tumult below; the sculler sitting upright, and holding his sculls steadily in the water. For a moment she seemed to be going under, but righted herself, and glided swiftly into the still water; and then the sculler cast a hasty and anxious glance around, till his eyes rested on our hero's half-drowned head.

"Oh, there you are!" he said, looking much relieved; "all right, I hope. Not hurt, eh?"

"No, thankee; all right, I believe," answered Tom. "What shall I do?"

"Swim ashore; I'll look after your boat." So Tom took the advice, swam ashore, and there stood dripping and watching the other as he righted the old tub which was floating quietly bottom upwards, little the worse for the mishap, and no doubt, if boats can wish, earnestly desiring in her wooden mind to be allowed to go quietly to pieces then and there, sooner to be rescued than be again entrusted to the guidance of freshmen.

The tub having been brought to the bank, the stranger started again, and collected the sculls and bottom boards which were floating about here and there in the pool, and also succeeded in making salvage of Tom's coat, the pockets of which held his watch, purse, and cigar case. These he brought to the bank, and

delivering them over, inquired whether there was anything else to look after.

"Thank you, no; nothing but my cap. Never mind it. It's luck enough not to have lost the coat," said Tom, holding up the dripping garment to let the water run out of the arms and pocket-holes, and then wringing it as well as he could. "At any rate," thought he, "I needn't be afraid of its looking too new any more."

The stranger put off again, and made one more round, searching for the cap and anything else which he might have overlooked, but without success. While he was doing so, Tom had time to look him well over, and see what sort of a man had come to his rescue. He hardly knew at the time the full extent of his obligation – at least if this sort of obligation is to be reckoned not so much by the service actually rendered, as by the risk encountered to be able to render it. There were probably not three men in the University who would have dared to shoot the lasher in a skiff in its then state, for it was in those times a really dangerous place; and Tom himself had an extraordinary escape, for, as Miller, the St. Ambrose coxswain, remarked on hearing the story, "No one who wasn't born to be hung could have rolled down it without knocking his head against something hard, and going down like lead when he got to the bottom."

He was very well satisfied with his inspection. The other man was evidently a year or two older than himself, his figure was more set, and he had stronger whiskers than are generally grown at twenty. He was somewhere about five feet ten in height, very

deep-chested, and with long powerful arms and hands. There was no denying, however, that at the first glance he was an ugly man; he was marked with small-pox, had large features, high cheekbones, deeply set eyes, and a very long chin; and had got the trick which many underhung men have of compressing his upper lip. Nevertheless, there was that in his face which hit Tom's fancy, and made him anxious to know his rescuer better. He had an instinct that good was to be gotten out of him. So he was very glad when the search was ended, and the stranger came to the bank, shipped his sculls, and jumped out with the painter of his skiff in his hand, which he proceeded to fasten to an old stump, while he remarked —

"I'm afraid the cap's lost."

"It doesn't matter the least. Thank you for coming to help me; it was very kind indeed, and more than I expected. Don't they say that one Oxford man will never save another from drowning unless they have been introduced?"

"I don't know," replied the other; "are you sure you're not hurt?"

"Yes, quite," said Tom, foiled in what he considered an artful plan to get the stranger to introduce himself.

"Then we're very well out of it," said the other, looking at the steep descent into the lasher, and the rolling tumbling rush of the water below.

"Indeed we are," said Tom; "but how in the world did you manage not to upset?"

"I hardly know myself – I had shipped a good deal of water, you see. Perhaps I ought to have jumped out on the bank and come across to you, leaving my skiff in the river, for if I had upset I couldn't have helped you much. However, I followed my instinct, which was to come the quickest way. I thought, too, that if I could manage to get down in the boat I should be of more use. I am very glad I did it," he added after a moment's pause; "I'm really proud of having come down that place."

"So ain't I," said Tom, with a laugh, in which the other joined.

"But now you're getting chilled," and he turned from the lasher and looked at Tom's chattering jaws.

"Oh, it's nothing. I'm used to being wet."

"But you may just as well be comfortable if you can. Here's this rough Jersey which I use instead of a coat; pull off that wet cotton affair, and put it on, and then we'll get to work, for we have plenty to do."

After a little persuasion Tom did as he was bid, and got into the great woolen garment, which was very comforting; and then the two set about getting their skiffs back into the main stream. This was comparatively easy as to the lighter skiff, which was soon baled out and hauled by main force on to the bank, carried across and launched again. The tub gave them much more trouble, for she was quite full of water and very heavy; but after twenty minutes or so of hard work, during which the mutual respect of the labourers for the strength and willingness of each other was much increased, she also lay in the main

stream, leaking considerably, but otherwise not much the worse for her adventure.

"Now what do you mean to do?" said the stranger. "I don't think you can pull home in her. One doesn't know how much she may be damaged. She may sink in the lock, or play any prank."

"But what am I to do with her?"

"Oh, you can leave her at Sandford and walk up, and send one of Hall's boys after her. Or, if you like, I will tow her up behind my skiff."

"Won't your skiff carry two?"

"Yes; if you like to come I'll take you, but you must sit very quiet."

"Can't we go down to Sandford first and have a glass of ale? What time is it? – the water has stopped my watch."

"A quarter past three. I have about twenty minutes to spare."

"Come along, then," said Tom; "but will you let me pull your skiff down to Sandford? I resolved to pull to Sandford to-day, and don't like to give it up."

"By all means, if you like," said the other, with a smile; "jump in, and I'll walk along the bank."

"Thank you," said Tom, hurrying into the skiff, in which he completed the remaining quarter of a mile, while the owner walked by the side, watching him.

They met on the bank at the little inn by Sandford lock, and had a glass of ale, over which Tom confessed that it was the first time he had ever navigated a skiff by himself, and gave a

detailed account of his adventures, to the great amusement of his companion. And by the time they rose to go, it was settled, at Tom's earnest request, that he should pull the sound skiff up, while his companion sat in the stern and coached him. The other consented very kindly, merely stipulating that he himself should take the sculls, if it should prove that Tom could not pull them up in time for hall dinner. So they started, and took the tub in tow when they came up to it. Tom got on famously under his new tutor, who taught him to get forward, and open his knees properly, and throw his weight on to the sculls at the beginning of the stroke. He managed even to get into Iffley lock on the way up without fouling the gates, and was then and there complimented on his progress. Whereupon, as they sat, while the lock filled, Tom poured out his thanks to his tutor for his instruction, which had been given so judiciously that, while he was conscious of improving at every stroke, he did not feel that the other was asserting any superiority over him; and so, though more humble than at the most disastrous period of his downward voyage, he was getting into a better temper every minute.

It is a great pity that some of our instructors in more important matters than sculling will not take a leaf out of the same book. Of course, it is more satisfactory to one's own self-love to make everyone who comes to one to learn, feel that he is a fool, and we wise men; but if our object is to teach well and usefully what we know ourselves there cannot be a worse method. No man, however, is likely to adopt it, so long as he is conscious that he

has anything himself to learn from his pupils; and as soon as he has arrived at the conviction that they can teach him nothing-that it is henceforth to be all give and no take-the sooner he throws up his office of teacher, the better it will be for himself, his pupils, and his country, whose sons he is misguiding.

On their way up, so intent were they on their own work that it was not until shouts of "Hello, Brown! how did you get there? Why, you said you were not going down today," greeted them just above the Gut, that they were aware of the presence of the freshmen's four-oar of St. Ambrose College, which had with some trouble succeeded in overtaking them.

"I said I wasn't going down with *you*," shouted Tom, grinding away harder than ever, that they might witness and wonder at his prowess.

"Oh, I dare say! Whose skiff are you towing up? I believe you've been upset."

Tom made no reply, and the four-oar floundered on ahead.

"Are you at St. Ambrose's?" asked his sitter, after a minute.

"Yes; that's my treadmill, that four-oar. I've been down in it almost every day since I came up, and very poor fun it is. So I thought to-day I would go on my own hook, and see if I couldn't make a better hand of it. And I have too, I know, thanks to you."

The other made no remark, but a little shade came over his face. He had no chance of making out Tom's college, as the new cap which would have betrayed him had disappeared in the lasher. He himself wore a glazed straw hat, which was of no

college; so that up to this time neither of them had known to what college the other belonged.

When they landed at Hall's, Tom was at once involved in a wrangle with the manager as to the amount of damage done to the tub; which the latter refused to assess before he knew what had happened to it; while our hero vigorously and with reason maintained, that if he knew his business it could not matter what had happened to the boat. There she was, and he must say whether she was better or worse, or how much worse than when she started. In the middle of which dialogue his new acquaintance, touching his arm, said, "You can leave my jersey with your own things; I shall get it to-morrow," and then disappeared.

Tom, when he had come to terms with his adversary, ran upstairs, expecting to find the other, and meaning to tell his name, and find out who it was that had played the good Samaritan by him. He was much annoyed when he found the coast clear, and dressed in a grumbling humour. "I wonder why he should have gone off so quick. He might just as well have stayed and walked up with me," thought he. "Let me see, though; didn't he say I was to leave his Jersey in our room, with my own things? Why, perhaps he is a St. Ambrose man himself. But then he would have told me so, surely. I don't remember to have seen his face in chapel or hall; but then there is such a lot of new faces, and he may not sit near me. However I mean to find him out before long, whoever he may be." With which resolve Tom crossed in the

punt into Christ's Church meadow, and strolled college-wards, feeling that he had had a good hard afternoon's exercise, and was much the better for it. He might have satisfied his curiosity at once by simply asking the manager who it was that had arrived with him; and this occurred to him before he got home, whereat he felt satisfied, but would not go back then, as it was so near hall time. He would be sure to remember it the first thing tomorrow.

As it happened, however, he had not so long to wait for the information which he needed; for scarcely had he sat down in hall and ordered his dinner, when he caught sight of his boating acquaintance, who walked in habited in a gown which Tom took for a scholar's. He took his seat at a little table in the middle of the hall, near the bachelors' table, but quite away from the rest of the undergraduates, at which sat four or five other men in similar gowns. He either did not or would not notice the looks of recognition which Tom kept firing at him until he had taken his seat.

"Who is that man that has just come in, do you know?" said Tom to his next neighbour, a second term man.

"Which?" said the other, looking up.

"That one over at the little table in the middle of the hall, with the dark whiskers. There, he has just turned rather from us, and put his arm on the table."

"Oh, his name is Hardy."

"Do you know him?"

"No; I don't think anybody does. They say he is a clever fellow,

but a very queer one."

"Why does he sit at that table!"

"He is one of our servitors; they all sit there together."

"Oh," said Tom, not much wiser for the information, but resolved to waylay Hardy as soon as the hall was over, and highly delighted to find that they were after all of the same college; for he had already begun to find out, that however friendly you may be with out-college men, you must live chiefly with those of your own. But now his scout brought his dinner, and he fell to with the appetite of a freshman on his ample commons.

CHAPTER III
A BREAKFAST AT DRYSDALE'S

No man in St. Ambrose College gave such breakfasts as Drysdale. Not the great heavy spreads for thirty or forty, which came once or twice a term, when everything was supplied out of the college kitchen, and you had to ask leave of the Dean before you could have it at all. In those ponderous feasts the most humdrum of the undergraduate kind might rival the most artistic, if he could only pay his battle-bill, or get credit with the cook. But the daily morning meal, when even gentlemen commoners were limited to two hot dishes out of the kitchen, this was Drysdale's forte. Ordinary men left the matter in the hands of scouts, and were content with the ever-recurring buttered toasts and eggs, with a dish of broiled ham, or something of the sort, with a marmalade and bitter ale to finish with; but Drysdale was not an ordinary man, as you felt in a moment when you went to breakfast with him for the first time.

The staircase on which he lived was inhabited, except in the garrets, by men in the fast set, and he and three others, who had an equal aversion to solitary feeding, had established a breakfast-club, in which, thanks to Drysdale's genius, real scientific gastronomy was cultivated. Every morning the boy from the Weirs arrived with freshly caught gudgeon, and now

and then an eel or trout, which the scouts on the staircase had learnt to fry delicately in oil. Fresh watercresses came in the same basket, and the college kitchen furnished a spitchedcocked chicken, or grilled turkey's leg. In the season there were plover's eggs; or, at the worst, there was a dainty omelette; and a distant baker, famed for his light rolls and high charges, sent in the bread – the common domestic college loaf being of course out of the question for anyone with the slightest pretension to taste, and fit only for the perquisite of scouts. Then there would be a deep Yorkshire pie, or reservoir of potted game, as a*piece, de resistance*, and three or four sorts of preserves; and a large cool tankard of cider or ale-cup to finish up with, or soda-water and maraschino for a change. Tea and coffee were there indeed, but merely as a compliment to those respectable beverages, for they were rarely touched by the breakfast eaters of No. 3 staircase. Pleasant young gentlemen they were on No. 3 staircase; I mean the ground and first floor men who formed the breakfast-club, for the garrets were nobodies. Three out of the four were gentlemen-commoners, with allowances of 500L a year at least each; and, as they treated their allowances as pocket-money, and were all in their first year, ready money was plenty and credit good, and they might have had potted hippopotamus for breakfast if they had chosen to order it, which they would most likely have done if they had thought of it.

Two out of the three were the sons of rich men who made their own fortunes, and sent their sons to St. Ambrose's because

it was very desirable that the young gentlemen should make good connexions. In fact, the fathers looked upon the University as a good investment, and gloried much in hearing their sons talk familiarly in the vacations of their dear friends Lord Harry This and Sir George That.

Drysdale, the third of the set, was the heir of an old as well of a rich family, and consequently, having his connexion ready made to his hand, cared little enough with whom he associated, provided they were pleasant fellows, and gave him good food and wines. His whole idea at present was to enjoy himself as much as possible; but he had good manly stuff in him at the bottom, and, had he fallen into any but the fast set, would have made a fine fellow, and done credit to himself and his college.

The fourth man at the breakfast-club, the Hon. Piers St. Cloud was in his third year, and was a very well-dressed, well-mannered, well-connected young man. His allowance was small for the set he lived with, but he never wanted for anything. He didn't entertain much, certainly, but when he did, everything was in the best possible style. He was very exclusive, and knew no man in college out of the fast set, and of these he addicted himself chiefly to the society of the rich freshmen, for somehow the men of his own standing seemed a little shy of him. But with the freshmen he was always hand and glove, lived in their rooms, and used their wines, horses, and other movable property as his own. Being a good whist and billiard player, and not a bad jockey, he managed in one way or another to make his young friends pay

well for the honour of his acquaintance; as, indeed, why should they not, at least those of them who came to the college to form eligible connexions; for had not his remote lineal ancestor come over in the same ship with William the Conqueror? Were not all his relations about the Court, as lords and ladies in waiting, white sticks or black rods, and in the innermost of all possible circles of the great world; and was there a better coat of arms than he bore in all Burke's Peerage?

Our hero had met Drysdale at a house in the country shortly before the beginning of his first term, and they had rather taken to one another. Drysdale had been amongst his first callers; and, as he came out of chapel one morning shortly after his arrival, Drysdale's scout came up to him with an invitation to breakfast. So he went to his own rooms, ordered his commons to be taken across to No. 3, and followed himself a few minutes afterwards. No one was in the rooms when he arrived, for none of the club had finished their toilettes. Morning chapel was not meant for, or cultivated by gentlemen-commoners; they paid double chapel fees, in consideration of which, probably, they were not expected to attend so often as the rest of the undergraduates; at any rate, they didn't, and no harm came to them in consequence of their absence. As Tom entered, a great splashing in an inner room stopped for a moment, and Drysdale's voice shouted out that he was in his tub, but would be with him in a minute. So Tom gave himself up to contemplation of the rooms in which his fortunate acquaintance dwelt; and very pleasant rooms they were. The large

room in which the breakfast-table was laid for five, was lofty and well proportioned, and panelled with old oak, and the furniture was handsome and solid, and in keeping with the room.

There were four deep windows, high up in the wall, with cushioned seats under them, two looking into the large quadrangle, and two into the inner one. Outside these windows, Drysdale had rigged up hanging gardens, which were kept full of flowers by the first nurseryman in Oxford, all the year round; so that even on this February morning, the scent of gardenia and violets pervaded the room, and strove for mastery with the smell of stale tobacco, which hung about the curtains and sofa. There was a large glass in an oak frame over the mantelpiece, which was loaded with choice pipes and cigar cases and quaint receptacles for tobacco; and by the side of the glass hung small carved oak frames, containing lists of meets of the Heyshrop, the Old Berkshire, and Drake's hounds, for the current week. There was a queer assortment of well-framed paintings and engravings on the walls; some of considerable merit, especially some watercolor and sea-pieces and engravings from Landseer's pictures, mingled with which hung Taglioni and Cerito, in short petticoats and impossible attitudes; Phosphurous winning the Derby; the Death of Grimaldi (the famous steeple-chase horse, not poor old Joe); an American Trotting Match, and Jem Belcher and Deaf Burke in attitudes of self-defense. Several tandem and riding whips, mounted in heavy silver, and a double-barrelled gun, and fishing rods, occupied one corner, and a polished copper cask, holding

about five gallons of mild ale, stood in another. In short, there was plenty of everything except books – the literature of the world being represented, so far as Tom could make out in his short scrutiny, by a few well-bound but badly used volumes of the classics, with the cribs thereto appertaining, shoved away into a cupboard which stood half open, and contained besides, half-emptied decanters, and large pewters, and dog collars, and packs of cards, and all sorts of miscellaneous articles to serve as an antidote.

Tom had scarcely finished his short survey when the door of the bedroom opened, and Drysdale emerged in a loose jacket lined with silk, his velvet cap on his head, and otherwise gorgeously attired. He was a pleasant-looking fellow of middle size, with dark hair, and a merry brown eye, with a twinkle in it, which spoke well for his sense of humor; otherwise, his large features were rather plain, but he had the look and manners of a thoroughly well-bred gentleman.

His first act, after nodding to Tom, was to seize on a pewter and resort to the cask in the corner, from whence he drew a pint or so of the contents, having, as he said, "'a whoreson longing for that poor creature, small beer.' We were playing Van-John in Blake's rooms till three last night, and he gave us devilled bones and mulled port. A fellow can't enjoy his breakfast after that without something to cool his coppers."

Tom was as yet ignorant of what Van-John might be, so held his peace, and took a pull at the beer which the other handed

to him; and then the scout entered, and received orders to bring up Jack and the breakfast, and not wait for any one. In another minute, a bouncing and scratching was heard on the stairs, and a white bulldog rushed in, a gem in his way; for his brow was broad and massive, his skin was as fine as a lady's, and his tail taper and nearly as thin as a clay pipe. His general look, and a way he had of going 'snuzzling' about the calves of strangers, were not pleasant for nervous people. Tom, however, was used to dogs, and soon became friends with him, which evidently pleased his host. And then the breakfast arrived, all smoking, and with it the two other ingenious youths, in velvet caps and far more gorgeous apparel, so far as colors went, than Drysdale. They were introduced to Tom, who thought them somewhat ordinary and rather loud young gentlemen. One of them remonstrated vigorously against the presence of that confounded dog, and so Jack was sent to lie down in a corner, and then the four fell to work upon the breakfast.

It was a good lesson in gastronomy, but the results are scarcely worth repeating here. It is wonderful, though, how you feel drawn to a man who feeds you well; and, as Tom's appetite got less, his liking and respect for his host undoubtedly increased.

When they had nearly finished, in walked the Honorable Piers, a tall slight man, two or three years older than the rest of them; good looking, and very well and quietly dressed, but with the drawing up of his nostril, and a drawing down of the corners of his mouth, which set Tom against him at once. The cool,

supercilious half-nod, moreover, to which he treated our hero when introduced to him, was enough to spoil his digestion, and hurt his self-love a good deal more than he would have liked to own.

"Here, Henry," said the Honorable Piers to the scout in attendance, seating himself, and inspecting the half-cleared dishes; "what is there for my breakfast?"

Henry bustled about, and handed a dish or two.

"I don't want these cold things; haven't you kept me any gudgeon?"

"Why sir" said Henry, "there was only two dozen this morning, and Mr. Drysdale told me to cook them all.

"To be sure I did," said Drysdale. "Just half a dozen for each of us four: they were first-rate. If you can't get here at half-past nine, you won't get gudgeon, I can tell you."

"Just go and get me a broil from the kitchen," said the Honorable Piers, without deigning an answer to Drysdale.

"Very sorry, sir; kitchen's shut by now, sir," answered Henry.

"Then go to Hinton's, and order some cutlets."

"I say, Henry," shouted Drysdale to the retreating scout; "not to my tick, mind! Put them down to Mr. St. Cloud."

Henry seemed to know very well that in that case he might save himself the trouble of the journey, and consequently returned to his waiting; and the Honorable Piers set to work upon his breakfast, without showing any further ill temper certainly, except by the stinging things which he threw every now and then

into the conversation, for the benefit of each of the others in turn.

Tom thought he detected signs of coming hostilities between his host and St. Cloud, for Drysdale seemed to prick up his ears and get combative whenever the other spoke, and lost no chance in roughing him in his replies. And, indeed, he was not far wrong; the fact being, that during Drysdale's first term, the other had lived on him-drinking his wine, smoking his cigars, driving his dog-cart, and winning his money; all which Drysdale, who was the easiest going and best tempered fellow in Oxford, had stood without turning a hair. But St. Cloud added to these little favors a half patronizing, half contemptuous manner, which he used with great success towards some of the other gentleman-commoners, who thought it a mark of high breeding, and the correct thing, but which Drysdale, who didn't care three straws about knowing St. Cloud, wasn't going to put up with.

However, nothing happened but a little sparring, and the breakfast things were cleared away, and the tankards left on the table, and the company betook themselves to cigars and easy chairs. Jack came out of his corner to be gratified with some of the remnants by his fond master, and then curled himself up on the sofa along which Drysdale lounged.

"What are you going to do to-day, Drysdale?" said one of the others. "I've ordered a leader to be sent on over the bridge, and mean to drive my dog-cart over, and dine at Abingdon. Won't you come?"

"Who's going besides?" asked Drysdale.

"Oh, only St. Cloud and Farley here. There's lots of room for a fourth."

"No, thank'ee; teaming's slow work on the back seat. Besides, I've half promised to go down in the boat."

"In the boat!" shouted the other. "Why, you don't mean to say you're going to take to pulling?"

"Well, I don't know; I rather think I am. I'm dog-tired of driving and doing the High Street, and playing cards and billiards all day, and our boat is likely to be head of the river, I think."

"By Jove! I should as soon have thought of you taking to reading, or going to University Sermon," put in St. Cloud.

"And the boating-men, too," went on Farley; "did you ever see such a set, St. Cloud? with their everlasting flannels and jerseys, and hair cropped like prize-fighters?"

"I'll bet a guinea there isn't one of them has more than 200L a year," put in Chanter, whose father could just write his name, and was making a colossal fortune by supplying bad iron rails to the new railway companies.

"What the devil do I care," broke in Drysdale; "I know they're a deal more amusing than you fellows, who can't do anything that don't cost pounds."

"Getting economical!" sneered St. Cloud.

"Well, I don't see the fun of tearing one's heart out, and blistering one's hands, only to get abused by that little brute Miller the coxswain," said Farley.

"Why, you won't be able to sit straight in your chair for a

month," said Chanter; "and the captain will make you dine at one, and fetch you out of anybody's rooms, confound his impudence whether he knows them or not, at eleven o'clock every night."

"Two cigars every day, and a pint and a half of liquid," and Farley inserted his cod fish face into the tankard; "fancy Drysdale on training allowance!"

Here a newcomer entered in a bachelor's gown, who was warmly greeted by the name of Sanders by Drysdale. St. Cloud and he exchanged the coldest possible nods; and the other two, taking the office from their mentor, stared at him through their smoke, and, after a minute or two's silence, and a few rude half-whispered remarks amongst themselves, went off to play a game of pyramids till luncheon time. Saunders took a cigar which Drysdale offered, and began asking about his friends at home, and what he had been doing in the vacation.

They were evidently intimate, though Tom thought that Drysdale didn't seem quite at his ease at first, which he wondered at, as Sanders took his fancy at once. However, eleven o'clock struck, and Tom had to go to lecture, where we cannot follow him just now, but must remain with Drysdale and Saunders, who chatted on very pleasantly for some twenty minutes, till a knock came at the door. It was not till the third summons that Drysdale shouted, "Come in," with a shrug of his shoulders, and an impatient kick at the sofa cushion at his feet, as though not half pleased at the approaching visit.

Reader! Had you not ever a friend a few years older than

yourself, whose good opinions you were anxious to keep? A fellow*teres atqua rotundus*; who could do everything better than you, from Plato and tennis down to singing a comic song and playing quoits? If you have had, wasn't he always in your rooms or company whenever anything happened to show your little weak points? Sanders, at any rate, occupied this position towards our young friend Drysdale, and the latter, much as he liked Sander's company, would have preferred it at any time than on an idle morning just at the beginning of term, when the gentlemen tradesmen, who look upon undergraduates in general, and gentlemen-commoners in particular, as their lawful prey, are in the habit of calling in flocks.

The new arrival was a tall florid man, with a half servile, half impudent, manner, and a foreign accent; dressed in sumptuous costume, with a velvet-faced coat, and a gorgeous plush waist-coat. Under his arm he carried a large parcel, which he proceeded to open, and placed upon a sofa the contents, consisting of a couple of coats, and three or four waistcoats and a pair of trousers. He saluted Sanders with a most obsequious bow, looked nervously at Jack, who opened one eye from between his master's legs and growled, and then, turning to Drysdale, asked if he should have the honor of seeing him try on any of the clothes?

"No; I can't be bored with trying them on now," said Drysdale; "leave them where they are."

Mr. Schloss would like very much on his return to town, in a day or two, to be able to assure his principals, that Mr. Drysdale's

orders had been executed to his satisfaction. He had also some very beautiful new stuffs with him, which he should like to submit to Mr. Drysdale, and without more ado began unfolding cards of the most fabulous plushes and cloths.

Drysdale glanced first at the cards and then at Sanders, who sat puffing his cigar, and watching Schloss's proceedings with a look not unlike Jack's when anyone he did not approve of approached his master.

"Confound your patterns, Schloss," said Drysdale; "I tell you I have more things than I want already."

"The large stripe, such as these, is now very much worn in London," went on Schloss, without heeding the rebuff, and spreading his cards on the table.

"D-trousers," replied Drysdale; "you seem to think a fellow has ten pair of legs."

"Monsieur is pleased to joke," smiled Schloss; "but, to be in the mode, gentlemen must have variety."

"Well, I won't order any now, that's flat," said Drysdale.

"Monsieur will do as he pleases; but it is impossible that he should not have some plush waists; the fabric is only just out, and is making a sensation."

"Now look here, Schloss; will you go if I order a waist coat?"

"Monsieur is very good; he sees how tasteful these new patterns are."

"I wouldn't, be seen at a cock-fight in one of them, there're as gaudy as a salmon-fly," said Drysdale, feeling the stuff which

the obsequious Schloss held out. "But it seems nice stuff, too," he went on; "I shouldn't mind having a couple of waistcoats of it of this pattern;" and he chucked across to Schloss a dark tartan waistcoat which was lying near him. "Have you got the stuff in that pattern?"

"Ah! no," said Schloss, gathering up the waistcoat; "but it shall not hinder. I shall have at once a loom for Monsieur set up at once in Paris."

"Set it up in Jericho if you like," said Drysdale; "and now go!"

"May I ask, Mr. Schloss," broke in Sanders, "what it will cost to set up the loom?"

"Ah! indeed, a trifle only; some twelve, or perhaps fourteen pounds." Sanders gave a chuckle, and puffed away at his cigar.

"By Jove," shouted Drysdale, jerking himself in a sitting posture, and upsetting Jack, who went trotting about the room, and snuffing at Schloss's legs; "do you mean to say, Schloss, you were going to make me waistcoats at fourteen guineas apiece?"

"Not if Monsieur disapproves. Ah! the large hound is not friendly to strangers; I will call again when Monsieur is more at leisure." And Schloss gathered up his cards and beat a hasty retreat, followed by Jack with his head on one side, and casting an enraged look at Sanders, as he slid through the door.

"Well done, Jack, old boy!" said Sanders, patting him; "what a funk the fellow was in. Well, you've saved your master a pony this fine morning. Cheap dog you've got, Drysdale."

"D – the fellow," answered Drysdale, "he leaves a bad taste in

one's mouth;" and he went to the table, took a pull at the tankard, and then threw himself down on the sofa again, as Jack jumped up and coiled himself round by his master's legs, keeping one half-open eye winking at him, and giving an occasional wag with the end of his taper tail.

Saunders got up, and began handling the new things. First he held up a pair of bright blue trousers, with a red stripe across them, Drysdale looking on from the sofa. "I say, Drysdale, you don't mean to say you really ordered these thunder-and-lightening affairs?"

"Heaven only knows," said Drysdale; "I daresay I did, I'd order a full suit cut out of my grandmother's farthingale to get that cursed Schloss out of my rooms sometimes."

"You'll never be able to wear them; even in Oxford the boys would mob you. Why don't you kick him down stairs?" suggested Sanders, putting down the trousers, and turning to Drysdale.

"Well, I've been very near it once or twice; but I don't know – my name's Easy – besides, I don't want to give up the beast altogether; he makes the best trousers in England."

"And these waistcoats," went on Sanders; "let me see; three light silk waistcoats, peach-color, fawn-color, and lavender. Well, of course, you can only wear these at your weddings. You may be married the first time in the peach or fawn-color; and then, if you have luck, and bury your first wife soon, it will be a delicate compliment to take to No.2 in the lavender, that being half-mourning; but still, you see, we're in difficulty as to one of the

three, either the peach or the fawn-color-"

Here he was interrupted by another knock, and a boy entered from the fashionable tobacconist's in Oriel Lane, who had general orders to let Drysdale have his fair share of anything very special in the cigar line. He deposited a two pound box of cigars at three guineas the pound, on the table, and withdrew in silence.

Then came a boot-maker with a new pair of top-boots, which Drysdale had ordered in November, and had forgotten next day. The artist, wisely considering that his young patron must have plenty of tops to last him through the hunting season (he himself having supplied three previous pairs in October), had retained the present pair for show in his window; and everyone knows that boots wear much better for being kept sometime before use. Now, however, as the hunting season was drawing to a close, and the place in the window was wanted for spring stock, he judiciously sent in the tops, merely adding half-a-sovereign or so to the price for interest on the out lay since the order. He also kindly left on the table a pair of large plated spurs to match the boots.

It never rains but it pours. Sanders sat smoking his cigar in provoking silence, while knock succeeded knock and tradesman followed tradesman; each depositing some article ordered, or supposed to have been ordered, or which ought in the judgment of the depositors to have been ordered, by the luckless Drysdale: and new hats, and ties, and gloves, and pins, jostled balsam of Neroli, and registered shaving-soap, and fancy letter paper, and

Eau de Cologne, on every available table. A visit from two livery-stable-keepers in succession followed, each of whom had several new leaders which they were anxious Mr. Drysdale should try as soon as possible. Drysdale growled and grunted, and wished them or Sanders at the bottom of the sea; however, he consoled himself with the thought that the worst was now passed, – there was no other possible supplier of undergraduate wants who could arrive.

Not so; in another minute a gentle knock came at the door. Jack pricked up his ears and wagged his tail; Drysdale recklessly shouted, "Come in!" the door slowly opened about eighteen inches, and a shock head of hair entered the room, from which one lively little gimlet eye went glancing about into every corner. The other eye was closed, but as a perpetual wink to indicate the unsleeping wariness of the owner, or because that hero had really lost the power of using it in some of his numerous encounters with men and beasts, no one, so far as I know, has ever ascertained.

"Ah! Mr. Drysdale, sir!" began the head; and then rapidly withdrew behind the door to avoid one of the spurs, which (being the missile nearest at hand) Drysdale instantly discharged at it. As the spur fell to the floor, the head reappeared in the room, and as quickly disappeared again, in deference to the other spur, the top boots, an ivory handled hair brush, and a translation of Euripides, which in turn saluted each successive appearance of said head; and the grin was broader on each reappearance.

Then Drysdale, having no other article within reach which he could throw, burst into a loud fit of laughter, in which Sanders and the head heartily joined, and shouted, "Come in, Joe, you old fool! and don't stand bobbing your ugly old mug in and out there, like a jack in the box."

So the head came in, and after it the body, and closed the door behind it; and a queer, cross-grained, tough-looking body it was, of about fifty years standing, or rather slouching, clothed in an old fustian coat, corduroy breeches and gaiters, and being the earthly tabernacle of Joe Muggles, the dog-fancier of St. Aldate's.

"How the deuce did you get by the lodge, Joe?" inquired Drysdale. Joe, be it known, had been forbidden the college for importing a sack of rats into the inner quadrangle, upon the turf of which a match at rat-killing had come off between the terriers of two gentlemen-commoners. This little event might have passed unnoticed, but that Drysdale had bought from Joe a dozen of the slaughtered rats, and nailed them on the doors of the four college tutors, three to a door; whereupon inquiry had been made, and Joe had been outlawed.

"Oh, please Mr. Drysdale, sir, I just watched the 'ed porter, sir, across to the buttery to get his mornin', and then I tips a wink to the under porter (pal o' mine, sir, the under porter), and makes a run of it right up."

"Well, you'll be quod'ed if you're caught! Now what do you want?"

"Why, you see, Mr. Drysdale, sir," said Joe, in his most insinuating tone, "my mate hev got an old dog brock, sir, from the Heythrop kennel, and Honble Wernham, sir of New Inn 'All, sir, he've jist been down our yard with a fighting chap from town, Mr. Drysdale – in the fancy, sir, he is, and hev got a matter of three dogs down a stoppin' at Milky Bill's. And he says, says he, Mr. Drysdale, as arra one of he's dogs'll draw the old un three times, while arra Oxford dog'll draw un twice, and Honble Wernham chaffs as how he'll back un for a fi' pun note;" – and Joe stopped to caress Jack, who was fawning on him as if he understood every word.

"Well, Joe, what then?" said Drysdale.

"So you see, Mr. Drysdale, sir," went on Joe, fondling Jack's muzzle, "my mate says, says he, 'Jack's the dog as can draw a brock,' says he, 'agin any Lonnun dog as ever was whelped; and Mr. Drysdale' says he, 'ain't the man as'd see two poor chaps bounced out of their honest name by arra town chap, and a fi' pun note's no more to he for the matter o' that, then to Honble Wernham his self,' says my mate."

"So I'm to lend you Jack for a match, and stand the stakes?"

"Well, Mr. Drysdale, sir, that was what my mate was a sayin'."

"You're cool heads, you and your mate," said Drysdale; "here, take a drink, and get out, and I'll think about it." Drysdale was now in a defiant humor, and resolved not to let Sanders think that his presence could keep him from any act of folly to which he was inclined.

Joe took his drink; and just then several men came in from lecture, and drew off Drysdale's attention from Jack, who quietly followed Joe out of the room, when that worthy disappeared. Drysdale only laughed when he found it out, and went down to the yard that afternoon to see the match between the London dog and his own pet.

"How in the world are youngsters with unlimited credit, plenty of ready money, and fast tastes, to be kept from making fools and blackguards of themselves up here," thought Sanders, as he strolled back to his college. And it is a question which has exercised other heads besides his, and probably is a long way yet from being well solved.

CHAPTER IV
THE ST. AMBROSE BOAT CLUB: ITS MINISTERY AND THEIR BUDGET

We left our hero, a short time back, busily engaged on his dinner commons, and resolved forthwith to make great friends with Hardy. It never occurred to him that there could be the slightest difficulty in carrying out this resolve. After such a passage as they two had had together that afternoon, he felt that the usual outworks of acquaintanceship had been cleared at a bound, and looked upon Hardy already as an old friend to whom he could talk out his mind as freely as he had been used to do to his old tutor at school, or to Arthur. Moreover, as there were already several things in his head which he was anxious to ventilate, he was all the more pleased that chance had thrown him across a man of so much older standing than himself, and one to whom he instinctively felt that he could look up.

Accordingly, after grace had been said, and he saw that Hardy had not finished his dinner, but sat down again when the fellows had left the hall, he strolled out, meaning to wait for his victim outside, and seize upon him then and there; so he stopped on the steps outside the hall-door, and to pass the time, joined

himself to one or two other men with whom he had a speaking acquaintance, who were also hanging about. While they were talking, Hardy came out of the hall, and Tom turned and stepped forward, meaning to speak to him. To his utter discomfiture, Hardy walked quickly away, looking straight before him, and without showing, by look or gesture, that he was conscious of our hero's existence, or had ever seen him before in his life.

Tom was so taken aback that he made no effort to follow. He just glanced at his companions to see whether they had noticed the occurrence, and was glad to see that they had not (being deep in the discussion of the merits of a new hunter of Simmons's, which one of them had been riding); so he walked away by himself to consider what it could mean. But the more he puzzled about it, the less could he understand it. Surely, he thought, Hardy must have seen me; and yet, if he had, why did he not recognize me? My cap and gown can't be such a disguise as all that. And yet common decency must have led him to ask whether I was any the worse for my ducking, if he knew me.

He scouted the notion, which suggested itself once or twice, that Hardy meant to cut him; and so, not being able to come to any reasonable conclusion, suddenly bethought him that he was asked to a wine-party; and putting his speculations aside for a moment, with the full intention nevertheless of clearing up the mystery as soon as possible, he betook himself to the rooms of his entertainer.

They were fair-sized rooms in the second quadrangle,

furnished plainly but well, so far as Tom could judge, but, as they were now laid out for the wine-party, they had lost all individual character for the time. Everyone of us, I suppose, is fond of studying the rooms, chambers, dens in short, of whatever sort they may be, of our friends and acquaintances – at least, I knew that I myself like to see what sort of a chair a man sits in, where he puts it, what books lie or stand on the shelves nearest his hand, what the objects are which he keeps most familiarly before him, in that particular nook of the earth's surface in which he is most at home, where he pulls off his coat, collar, and boots, and gets into an old easy shooting-jacket, and his broadest slippers. Fine houses and fine rooms have little attraction for most men, and those who have the finest drawing-rooms are probably the most bored by them; but the den of the man you like, or are disposed to like, has the strongest and strangest attraction for you. However, an Oxford undergraduate's room, set out for a wine-party, can tell you nothing. All the characteristics are shoved away into the background, and there is nothing to be seen but a long mahogany set out with bottles, glasses, and dessert. In the present instance the preparations for festivity were pretty much what they ought to be: good sound port and sherry, biscuits, and a plate or two of nuts and dried fruits. The host, who sat at the head of the board, was one of the main-stays of the College boat-club. He was treasurer of the club, and also a kind of a boating nurse, who looked-up and trained the young oars, and in this capacity had been in command of the freshmen's four-oar, in which Tom

had been learning his rudiments. He was a heavy, burly man, naturally awkward in his movements, but gifted with a steady sort of dogged enthusiasm, and by dint of hard and constant training, had made himself into a most useful oar, fit for any place in the middle of the boat. In the two years of his residence, he had pulled down to Sandford every day except Sundays, and much farther whenever he could get anybody to accompany him. He was the most good natured man in the world, very badly dressed, very short sighted, and called everybody "old fellow." His name was simple Smith, generally known as Diogenes Smith, from an eccentric habit which he had of making an easy chair of his hip bath. Malicious acquaintance declared that when Smith first came up, and, having paid the valuation for the furniture in his rooms, came to inspect the same, the tub in question had been left by chance in the sitting-room, and that Smith, not having the faintest idea of its proper use, had by the exercise of his natural reason come to the conclusion that it could only be meant for a man to sit in, and so had kept it in his sitting-room, and had taken to it as an arm-chair. This I have reason to believe was a libel. Certain it is, however, that in his first term he was discovered sitting solemnly in the tub, by his fire-side, with his spectacles on, playing the flute – the only other recreation besides boating in which he indulged; and no amount of quizzing could get him out of the habit. When alone, or with only one or two friends in his room, he still occupied the tub; and declared that it was the most perfect of seats hitherto invented, and, above all, adapted for the

recreation of a boating man, to whom cushioned seats should be an abomination. He was naturally a very hospitable man, and on this night was particularly anxious to make his rooms pleasant to all comers, as it was a sort of opening for the boating season. This wine of his was a business matter, in fact, to which Diogenes had invited officially, as treasurer of the boat-club, every man who had ever shown the least tendency to pulling, – many with whom he had scarcely a nodding acquaintance. For Miller, the coxswain, had come up at last. He had taken his B.A. degree in the Michaelmas term, and had been very near starting for a tour in the East. Upon turning the matter over in his mind, however, Miller had come to the conclusion that Palestine, and Egypt, and Greece could not run away, but that, unless he was there to keep matters going, the St. Ambrose boat would lose the best chance it was ever likely to have of getting to the head of the river. So he had patriotically resolved to reside till June, read divinity, and coach the racing crew; and had written to Diogenes to call together the whole boating interest of the College, that they might set to work at once in good earnest. Tom, and the three or four other freshmen present, were duly presented to Miller as they came in, who looked them over as the colonel of a crack regiment might look over horses at Horncastle-fair, with a single eye to their bone and muscle, and how much work might be got out of them. They then gathered towards the lower end of the long table, and surveyed the celebrities at the upper end with much respect. Miller, the coxswain, sat on the host's right

hand, – a slight, resolute, fiery little man, with curly black hair. He was peculiarly qualified by nature for the task which he had set himself; and it takes no mean qualities to keep a boat's crew well together and in order. Perhaps he erred a little on the side of over-strictness and severity; and he certainly would have been more popular had his manners been a thought more courteous; but the men who rebelled most against his tyranny grumblingly confessed that he was a first-rate coxswain.

A very different man was the captain of the boat, who sat opposite to Miller; altogether, a noble specimen of a very noble type of our countrymen. Tall and strong of body; courageous and even-tempered; tolerant of all men; sparing of speech, but ready in action; a thoroughly well balanced, modest, quiet Englishman; one of those who do a good stroke of the work of the country without getting much credit for it, or even becoming aware of the fact; for the last thing such men understand is how to blow their own trumpets. He was perhaps too easy for the captain of St. Ambrose boat-club; at any rate, Miller was always telling him so. But, if he was not strict enough with others, he never spared himself, and was as good as three men in the boat at a pinch.

But if I venture on more introductions, my readers will get bewildered; so I must close the list, much as I should like to make them known to "fortis Gyas fortisque Cloanthus," who sat round the chiefs, laughing and consulting, and speculating on the chances of the coming races. No, stay, there is one other man they must make room for. Here he comes, rather late, in a very

glossy hat, the only man in the room not in cap and gown. He walks up and takes his place by the side of the host as a matter of course; a handsome, pale man, with a dark, quick eye, conscious that he draws attention wherever he goes, and apparently of the opinion that it is right.

"Who is that who has just come in in beaver?" said Tom, touching the next man to him.

"Oh, don't you know? that's Blake; he's the most wonderful fellow in Oxford," answered his neighbor.

"How do you mean?" said Tom.

"Why, he can do everything better than almost anybody, and without any trouble at all. Miller was obliged to have him in the boat last year, though he never trained a bit. Then he's in the eleven, and is a wonderful rider, and tennis-player, and shot."

"Ay, and he's so awfully clever with it all," joined in the man on the other side. "He'll be a safe first, though I don't believe he reads more than you or I. He can write songs, too, as fast as you can talk nearly, and sings them wonderfully."

"Is he of our College, then?"

"Yes, of course, or he couldn't have been in our boat last year."

"But I don't think I ever saw him in chapel or hall."

"No, I daresay not. He hardly ever goes to either, and yet he manages never to get hauled up much, no one knows how. He never gets up now till the afternoon, and sits up nearly all night playing cards with the fastest fellows, or going round singing glees at three or four in the morning."

Tom sipped his port and looked with great interest at the admirable Crichton of St. Ambrose's; and, after watching him a few moments said in a low voice to his neighbor, —

"How wretched he looks! I never saw a sadder face."

Poor Blake! one can't help calling him "poor," although he himself would have winced at it more than any name you could have called him. You might have admired, feared, or wondered at him, and he would have been pleased; the object of his life was to raise such feelings in his neighbors; but pity was the last which he would like to excite.

He was indeed a wonderfully gifted fellow, full of all sorts of energy and talent, and power and tenderness; and yet, as his face told only too truly to anyone who watched him when he was exerting himself in society, one of the most wretched men in the College. He had a passion for success – for beating everybody else in whatever he took in hand, and that, too, without seeming to make any great effort himself. The doing a thing well and thoroughly gave him no satisfaction unless he could feel that he was doing it better and more easily than A, B, or C, and they felt and acknowledged this. He had had full swing of success for two years, and now the Nemesis was coming.

For, although not an extravagant man, many of the pursuits in which he has eclipsed all rivals were far beyond the means of any but a rich one, and Blake was not rich. He had a fair allowance, but by the end of his first year was considerably in debt, and, at the time we are speaking of, the whole pack of Oxford tradesmen

into whose books he had got (having smelt out the leaness of his expectations), were upon him, besieging him for payment. This miserable and constant annoyance was wearing his soul out. This was the reason why his oak was sported, and he was never seen till the afternoons, and turned night into day. He was too proud to come to an understanding with his persecutors, even had it been possible; and now, at his sorest need, his whole scheme of life was failing him; his love of success was turning into ashes in his mouth; he felt much more disgust than pleasure at his triumphs over other men, and yet the habit of striving for successes, notwithstanding its irksomeness, was too strong to be resisted.

Poor Blake! he was living on from hand to mouth, flashing out in his old brilliancy and power, and forcing himself to take the lead in whatever company he might be; but utterly lonely and depressed when by himself – reading feverishly in secret, in a desperate effort to retrieve all by high honors and a fellowship. As Tom said to his neighbor, there was no sadder face than his to be seen in Oxford.

And yet at this very wine party he was the life of everything, as he sat up there between Diogenes – whom he kept in a constant sort of mild epileptic fit, from laughter, and wine going the wrong way (for whenever Diogenes raised his glass Blake shot him with some joke) – and the Captain who watched him with the most undisguised admiration. A singular contrast, the two men! Miller, though Blake was the torment of his life, relaxed after

the first quarter of all hour; and our hero, by the same time, gave himself credit for being a much greater ass than he was, for having ever thought Blake's face a sad one.

When the room was quite full, and enough wine had been drunk to open the hearts of the guests, Diogenes rose on a signal from Miller, and opened the budget. The financial statement was a satisfactory one; the club was almost free of debt; and, comparing their position with that of other colleges, Diogenes advised that they might fairly burden themselves a little more, and then, if they would stand a whip of ten shillings a man, they might have a new boat, which he believed they all would agree had become necessary. Miller supported the new boat in a pungent little speech; and the Captain, when appealed to, nodded and said he thought they must have one. So the small supplies and the large addition to the club debt was voted unanimously, and the Captain, Miller, and Blake, who had many notions as to the flooring, lines, and keel of a racing boat, were appointed to order and superintend the building.

Soon afterwards, coffee came in and cigars were lighted; a large section of the party went off to play pool, others to stroll about the streets, others to whist; a few, let us hope, to their own rooms to read; but these latter were a sadly small minority even in the quietest of St. Ambrose parties.

Tom, who was fascinated by the heroes at the head of the table, sat steadily on, sidling up towards them as the intermediate places became vacant, and at last attained the next chair but

one to the Captain, where for the time he sat in perfect bliss. Blake and Miller were telling boating stories of the Henley and Thames regattas, the latter of which had been lately started with great*eclat*; and from these great yearly events, and the deeds of prowess done thereat, the talk came gradually round to the next races.

"Now, Captain," said Miller, suddenly, "have you thought yet what new men we are to try in the crew this year?"

"No, 'pon my honor I haven't," said the Captain, "I'm reading, and have no time to spare. Besides, after all, there's lots of time to think about it. Here we're only half through Lent term, and the races don't begin till the end of Easter term."

"It won't do," said Miller, "we must get the crew together this term."

"Well, you and Smith put your heads together and manage it," said the Captain. "I will go down any day, and as often as you like, at two o'clock."

"Let's see," said Miller to Smith, "how many of the old crew have we left?"

"Five, counting Blake," answered Diogenes.

"Counting me! well, that's cool," laughed Blake; "you old tub haunting flute-player, why am I not to be counted?"

"You never will train, you see," said Diogenes.

"Smith is quite right," said Miller; "there's no counting on you, Blake. Now, be a good fellow, and promise to be regular this year."

"I'll promise to do my work in a race, which is more than some of your best-trained men will do," said Blake, rather piqued.

"Well you know what I think on the subject," said Miller; "but who have we got for the other three places?"

"There's Drysdale would do," said Diogenes; "I hear he was a capital oar at Eton; and so, though I don't know him, I managed to get him once down last term. He would do famously for No.2, or No.3 if he would pull."

"Do you think he will, Blake? You know him, I suppose," said Miller.

"Yes, I know him well enough," said Blake; and, shrugging his shoulders, added, "I don't think you'll get him to train much."

"Well, we must try," said Miller. "Now, who else is there?"

Smith went through four or five names, at each of which Miller shook his head.

"Any promising freshmen?" said he at last.

"None better than Brown here," said Smith. "I think he'll do well if he will only work, and stand being coached."

"Have you ever pulled much?" said Miller.

"No," said Tom, "never till this last month – since I've been up here."

"All the better," said Miller; "now, Captain, you hear; we may probably have to go in with three new hands; they must get into your stroke this term, or we shall be nowhere."

"Very well," said the Captain; "I'll give from two till five any days you like."

"And now let's go and have one pool," said Blake, getting up.

"Come, Captain, just one little pool after all this business."

Diogenes insisted on staying to play his flute; Miller was engaged; but the Captain, with a little coaxing, was led away by Blake, and good-naturedly asked Tom to accompany them, when he saw that he was looking as if he would like it. So the three went off to the billiard-rooms; Tom in such spirits at the chance of being tried in the crew, that he hardly noticed the exceedingly bad exchange which he had involuntarily made of his new cap and gown for a third-year cap with the board broken into several pieces, and a fusty old gown which had been about college probably for ten generations. Under-graduate morality in the matter of caps and gowns seems to be founded on the celebrated maxim, "Propriete c'est le vol."

They found the St. Ambrose pool-room full of the fast set; and Tom enjoyed his game much, though his three lives were soon disposed of. The Captain and Blake were the last lives on the board, and divided the pool at Blake's suggestion. He had scarcely nerve for playing out a single handed match with such an iron-nerved, steady piece of humanity as the Captain, though he was the more brilliant player of the two. The party then broke up, and Tom returned to his rooms; and, when he was by himself again, his thoughts recurred to Hardy. How odd, he thought, that they never mentioned him for the boat! Could he have done anything to be ashamed of? How was it that nobody seemed to know him, and he to know nobody.

Most readers, I doubt not, will think our hero very green for being puzzled at so simple a matter; and, no doubt, the steps in the social scale in England are very clearly marked out, and we all come to the appreciation of the gradations sooner or later. But our hero's previous education must be taken into consideration. He had not been instructed at home to worship mere conventional distinctions of rank or wealth, and had gone to a school which was not frequented by persons of rank, and where no one knew whether a boy was heir to a principality, or would have to fight his own way in the world. So he was rather taken by surprise at what he found to be the state of things at St. Ambrose's and didn't easily realize it.

CHAPTER V
HARDY, THE SERVITOR

It was not long before Tom had effected his object in part. That is to say, he had caught Hardy several times in the Quadrangle coming out of Lecture Hall, or Chapel, and had fastened himself upon him; often walking with him even up to the door of his rooms. But there matters ended. Hardy was very civil and gentlemanly; he even seemed pleased with the volunteered companionship; but there was undoubtedly a coolness about him which Tom could not make out. But, as he only liked Hardy more, the more he saw of him, he very soon made up his mind to break ground himself, and to make a dash at any rate for something more than a mere speaking acquaintance.

One evening he had as usual walked from Hall with Hardy up to his door. They stopped a moment talking, and then Hardy, half-opening the door, said, "Well, goodnight; perhaps we shall meet on the river to-morrow," and was going in, when Tom, looking him in the face, blurted out, "I say, Hardy, I wish you'd let me come in and sit with you a bit."

"I never ask a man of our college into my rooms," answered the other, "but come in by all means if you like;" and so they entered.

The room was the worst, both in situation and furniture, which

Tom had yet seen. It was on the ground floor, with only one window, which looked out into a back yard, where were the offices of the college. All day, and up to nine o'clock at night, the yard and offices were filled with scouts; boys cleaning boots and knives; bed-makers emptying slops and tattling scandal; scullions peeling potatoes and listening; and the butchers' and green-grocers' men who supply the college, and loitering about to gossip and get a taste of the college ale before going about their business. The room was large, but low and close, and the floor uneven. The furniture did not add to the cheerfulness of the apartment. It consisted of one large table in the middle, covered with an old chequered table-cloth, and an Oxford table near the window, on which lay half-a-dozen books with writing materials. A couple of plain Windsor chairs occupied the two sides of the fireplace, and half-a-dozen common wooden chairs stood against the opposite wall, three on each side of a pretty-well-filled book-case; while an old rickety sofa, covered with soiled chintz, leaned against the wall which fronted the window, as if to rest its lame leg. The carpet and rug were dingy, and decidedly the worse for wear; and the college had evidently neglected to paper the room or whitewash the ceiling for several generations. On the mantle-piece reposed a few long clay pipes, and a brown earthenware receptacle for tobacco, together with a japanned tin case, shaped like a figure of eight, the use of which puzzled Tom exceedingly. One modestly framed drawing of a 10-gun brig hung above, and at the side of the fireplace a sword and belt. All this Tom

had time to remark by the light of the fire, which was burning brightly, while his host produced a couple of brass candlesticks from his cupboard and lighted up, and drew the curtain before his window. Then Tom instinctively left off taking his notes, for fear of hurting the other's feelings (just as he would have gone on doing, and making remarks on everything, had the rooms been models of taste and comfort), and throwing his cap and gown on the sofa, sat down on one of the Windsor chairs.

"What a jolly chair," said he; "where do you get them? I should like to buy one."

"Yes, they're comfortable enough," said Hardy, "but the reason I have them is, that they're the cheapest armchair one can get. I like an arm-chair, and can't afford to have any other than these."

Tom dropped the subject of the chairs at once, following his instinct again, which, sad to say, was already teaching him that poverty is a disgrace to a Briton, and that, until you know a man thoroughly, you must always seem to assume that he is the owner of unlimited ready money. Somehow or another, he began to feel embarrassed, and couldn't think of anything to say, as his host took down the pipes and tobacco from the mantle-piece, and placed them on the table. However, anything was better than silence, so he began again.

"Very good-sized rooms yours seem," said he, taking up a pipe mechanically.

"Big enough, for the matter of that," answered the other, "but

very dark and noisy in the day-time."

"So I should think," said Tom; "do you know, I'd sooner, now, have my freshman's rooms up in the garrets. I wonder you don't change."

"I get these for nothing," said his host, putting his long clay to the candle, and puffing out volumes of smoke. Tom felt more and more unequal to the situation, and filled his pipe in silence. The first whiff made him cough as he wasn't used to the fragrant weed in this shape.

"I'm afraid you don't smoke tobacco," said his host from behind his own cloud; "shall I go out and fetch you a cigar? I don't smoke them myself; I can't afford it."

"No, thank you," said Tom blushing for shame as if he had come there only to insult his host, and wishing himself heartily out of it, "I've got my case here; and the fact is I will smoke a cigar if you'll allow me, for I'm not up to pipes yet. I wish you'd take some," he went on, emptying his cigars on to the table.

"Thank'ee," replied his host, "I prefer a pipe. And now what will you have to drink? I don't keep wine but I can get a bottle of anything you like from the common room. That's one of *our*privileges," – he gave a grim chuckle as he emphasised the word "our".

"Who on earth are *we*?" thought Tom "servitors I suppose," for he knew already that undergraduates in general could not get wine from the college cellars.

"I don't care a straw about wine," said he, feeling very hot

about the ears; "a glass of beer, or anything you have here – or tea."

"Well, I can give you a pretty good glass of whiskey," said his host, going to the cupboard, and producing a black bottle, two tumblers of different sizes, some little wooden toddy ladles, and sugar in an old cracked glass.

Tom vowed that, if there was one thing in the world he liked more than another, it was whiskey; and began measuring out the liquor carefully into his tumbler, and rolling it round between his eyes and the candle and smelling it, to show what a treat it was to him; while his host put the kettle on the fire, to ascertain that it had quit boiling, and then, as it spluttered and fizzed, filled up the two tumblers, and restored it to its place on the hob.

Tom swallowed some of the mixture, which nearly made him cough again – for, though it was very good, it was also very potent. However, by an effort he managed to swallow his cough; he would about as soon have lost a little finger as let it out. Then, to his great relief, his host took the pipe from his lips, and inquired, "How do you like Oxford?"

"I hardly know yet," said Tom; "the first few days I was delighted with going about and seeing the buildings, and finding out who had lived in each of the old colleges, and pottering about in the Bodleian, and fancying I should like to be a great scholar. Then I met several old school fellows going about, who are up at other colleges, and went to their rooms and talked over old times. But none of my very intimate friends are up yet, and unless you

care very much about a man already, you don't seem likely to get intimate with him up here, unless he is at your own college."

He paused, as if expecting an answer.

"I daresay not," said Hardy, "but I never was at a public school, unluckily, and so am no judge."

"Well, then, as to the college life," went on Tom, "it's all very well as far as it goes. There's plenty of liberty and good food. And the men seem nice fellows – many of them, at least, so far as I can judge. But I can't say that I like it as much as I liked our school life."

"I don't understand," said Hardy. "Why not?"

"Oh! I hardly know," said Tom laughing; "I don't seem as if I had anything to do here; that's one reason, I think. And then, you see, at Rugby I was rather a great man. There one had a share in the ruling of 300 boys, and a good deal of responsibility; but here one has only just to take care of oneself, and keep out of scrapes; and that's what I never could do. What do you think a fellow ought to do, now, up here?"

"Oh I don't see much difficulty in that," said his host, smiling; "get up your lectures well, to begin with."

"But my lectures are a farce," said Tom; "I've done all the books over and over again. They don't take me an hour a day to get up."

"Well, then, set to work reading something regularly – reading for your degree, for instance."

"Oh, hang it! I can't look so far forward as that; I shan't be

going up for three years."

"You can't begin too early. You might go and talk to your college-tutor about it."

"So I did," said Tom; "at least I meant to do it. For he asked me and two other freshmen to breakfast the other morning, and I was going to open out to him; but when I got there I was quite shut up. He never looked one of us in the face, and talked in set sentences, and was cold, and formal, and condescending. The only bit of advice he gave us was to have nothing to do with boating – just the one thing which I feel a real interest in. I couldn't get out a word of what I wanted to say."

"It is unlucky, certainly, that our present tutors take so little interest in anything which the men care about. But it is more from shyness than anything else, that manner which you noticed. You may be sure that he was more wretched and embarrassed than any of you."

"Well, but now I should really like to know what you did yourself," said Tom; "you are the only man of much older standing than myself whom I know at all yet – I mean I don't know anybody else well enough to talk about this sort of thing to them. What did you do, now, besides learning to pull, in your first year?"

"I had learnt to pull before I came up here," said Hardy.

"I really hardly remember what I did besides read. You see, I came up with a definite purpose of reading. My father was very anxious that I should become a good scholar. Then my position

in the college and my poverty naturally kept me out of the many things which other men do."

Tom flushed again at the ugly word, but not so much as at first. Hardy couldn't mind the subject, or he would never be forcing it up at every turn, he thought.

"You wouldn't think it," he began again, harping on the same string, "but I can hardly tell you how I miss the sort of responsibility I was talking to you about. I have no doubt I shall get the vacuum filled up before long, but for the life of me I can't see how yet."

"You will be a very lucky fellow if you don't find it quite as much as you can do to keep yourself in order up here. It is about the toughest part of a man's life, I do believe, the time he has spent here. My university life has been so different altogether from what yours will be, that my experience isn't likely to benefit you."

"I wish you would try me, though," said Tom; "you don't know what a teachable sort of a fellow I am, if any body will take me the right way. You taught me to scull, you know; or at least put me in a way to learn. But sculling, and rowing, and cricket, and all the rest of it, with such reading as I am likely to do, won't be enough. I feel sure of that already.

"I don't think it will," said Hardy. "No amount of physical or mental work will fill the vacuum you were talking of just now. It is the empty house swept and garnished which the boy might have had glimpses of, but the man finds yawning within him, which

must be filled somehow. It's a pretty good three years' work to learn how to keep the devils out of it, more or less; by the time you take your degree. At least I have found it so."

Hardy rose and took a turn or two up and down his room. He was astonished at finding himself talking so unreservedly to one of whom he knew so little, and half-wished the words recalled. He lived much alone, and thought himself morbid and too self-conscious; why should he be filling a youngster's head with puzzles? How did he know that they were thinking of the same thing?

But the spoken word cannot be recalled; it must go on its way for good or evil; and this one set the hearer staring into the ashes, and putting many things together in his head.

It was some minutes before he broke silence, but at last he gathered up his thoughts, and said, "Well, I hope I sha'n't shirk when the time comes. You don't think a fellow need shut himself up, though? I'm sure I shouldn't be any the better for that."

"No, I don't think you would," said Hardy.

"Because, you see," Tom went on, waxing bolder and more confidential, "If I were to take to moping by myself, I shouldn't read as you or any sensible fellow would do; I know that well enough. I should just begin, sitting with my legs upon the mantel-piece, and looking into my own inside. I see you are laughing, but you know what mean, don't you now?"

"Yes; staring into the vacuum you were talking of just now; it all comes back to that," said Hardy.

"Well, perhaps it does," said Tom; "and I don't believe it does a fellow a bit of good to be thinking about himself and his own doings."

"Only he can't help himself," said Hardy. "Let him throw himself as he will into all that is going on up here, after all he must be alone for a great part of his time – all night at any rate – and when he gets his oak sported, it's all up with him. He must be looking more or less into his own inside, as you call it."

"Then I hope he won't find it as ugly a business as I do. If he does, I'm sure he can't be worse employed."

"I don't know that," said Hardy; "he can't learn anything worth learning in any other way."

"Oh, I like that!" said Tom; "it's worth learning how to play tennis, and how to speak the truth. You can't learn either by thinking of yourself ever so much."

"You must know the truth before you can speak it," said Hardy.

"So you always do in plenty of time."

"How?" said Hardy.

"Oh, I don't know," said Tom; "by a sort of instinct I suppose. I never in my life felt any doubt about what I *ought* to say or do; did you?"

"Well, yours is a good, comfortable, working belief at any rate," said Hardy, smiling; "and I should advise you to hold on to it as long as you can."

"But you don't think I can very long, eh?"

"No: but men are very different. There's no saying. If you were going to get out of the self-dissecting business altogether though, why should you have brought the subject up at all to-night? It looks awkward for you, doesn't it?"

Tom began to feel rather forlorn at this suggestion, and probably betrayed it in his face, for Hardy changed the subject suddenly.

"How do you get on in the boat? I saw you going down to-day, and thought the time much better."

Tom felt greatly relieved, as he was beginning to find himself in rather deep water; so he rushed into boating with great zest, and the two chatted on very pleasantly on that and other matters.

The college clock struck during a pause in their talk, and Tom looked at his watch.

"Eight o'clock I declare," he said; "why I must have been here more than two hours. I'm afraid, now, you have been wanting to work, and I have kept you from it with my talk."

"No, it's Saturday night. Besides, I don't get much society that I care about, and so I enjoy it all the more. Won't you stop and have some tea?"

Tom gladly consented, and his host produced a somewhat dilapidated set of crockery, and proceeded to brew the drink least appreciated at St. Ambrose's. Tom watched him in silence, much excercised in his mind as to what manner of man he had fallen upon; very much astonished at himself for having opened out so freely, and feeling a desire to know more about Hardy,

not unmixed with a sort of nervousness as to how he was to accomplish it.

When Hardy sat down again and began pouring out the tea, curiosity overcame, and he opened with —

"So you read nights, after Hall?

"Yes, for two or three hours; longer, when I am in a good humor."

"What, all by yourself?"

"Generally; but once or twice a week Grey comes in to compare notes. Do you know him?"

"No, at least he hasn't called on me, I have just spoken to him."

"He is a quiet fellow, and I daresay doesn't call on any man unless he knew something of him before."

"Don't you?"

"Never," said Hardy, shortly; and added after a short pause, "very few men would thank me if I did; most would think it impertinent, and I'm too proud to risk that."

Tom was on the point of asking why; but the uncomfortable feeling which he had nearly lost came back on him.

"I suppose one very soon gets tired of the wine and supper party life, though I own I find it pleasant enough now."

"I have never been tired," said Hardy; "servitors are not troubled with that sort of a thing. If they were I wouldn't go unless I could return them, and that I can't afford."

"There he goes again," thought Tom; "why will he be throwing that old story in my face over and over again? He can't think I

care about his poverty; I won't change the subject this time, at any rate." And so he said:

"You don't mean to say it makes any real difference to a man in society up here, whether he is poor or rich; I mean, of course, if he is a gentleman and a good fellow?"

"Yes, it does – the very greatest possible. But don't take my word for it. Keep your eyes open and judge for yourself; I daresay I'm prejudiced on the subject."

"Well, I shan't believe it if I can help it," said Tom; "you know, you said just now that you never called on any one. Perhaps you don't give men a fair chance. They might be glad to know you if you would let them, and may think it's your fault that they don't."

"Very possible," said Hardy; "I tell you not to take my word for it."

"It upsets all one's ideas so," went on Tom; "why Oxford ought to be the place in England where money should count for nothing. Surely, now, such a man as Jervis, our captain, has more influence than all the rich men in the college put together, and is more looked up to?"

"He's one of a thousand," said Hardy; "handsome, strong, good-tempered, clever, and up to everything. Besides, he isn't a poor man; and mind, I don't say that if he were he wouldn't be where he is. I am speaking of the rule, and not of the exceptions."

Here Hardy's scout came in to say that the Dean wanted to speak to him. So he put on his cap and gown, and Tom rose also.

"Well, I'm sorry to turn you out," said Hardy; "and I'm afraid

I've been very surly and made you very uncomfortable. You won't come back again in a hurry."

"Indeed I will though, if you will let me," said Tom; "I have enjoyed my evening immensely."

"Then come whenever you like," said Hardy.

"But I am afraid of interfering with your reading," said Tom.

"Oh, you needn't mind that, I have plenty of time on my hands; besides, one can't read all night, and from eight till ten you'll find me generally idle."

"Then you'll see me often enough. But promise, now, to turn me out whenever I am in the way."

"Very well," said Hardy, laughing; and so they parted for the time.

Some twenty minutes afterwards Hardy returned to his room after his interview with the Dean, who merely wanted to speak to him about some matter of college business.

He flung his cap and gown on the sofa, and began to walk up and down his room, at first hurriedly, but soon with his usual regular tramp. However expressive a man's face may be, and however well you may know it, it is simply nonsense to say that you can tell what he is thinking about by looking at it, as many of us are apt to boast. Still more absurd would it be to expect readers to know what Hardy is thinking about, when they have never had the advantage of seeing his face even in a photograph. Wherefore, it would seem that the author is bound on such occasions to put his readers on equal vantage ground with

himself, and not only tell what a man does, but, so far as may be, what he is thinking about also.

His first thought, then, was one of pleasure at having been sought by one who seemed to be just the sort of friend he would like to have. He contrasted our hero with the few men with whom he had generally lived, and for some of whom he had a high esteem – whose only idea of exercise was a two hour constitutional walk in the afternoons, and whose life was chiefly spent over books and behind sported oaks – and felt that this was more of a man after his own heart. Then came doubts whether his new friend would draw back when he had been up a little longer, and knew more of the place. At any rate he had said and done nothing to tempt him; "if he pushes the acquaintance – and I think he will – it will be because he likes me for myself. And I can do him good too, I feel sure," he went on, as he ran over rapidly his own life for the last three years. "Perhaps he won't flounder into all the sloughs which I have had to drag through; he will get too much of the healthy, active life up here for that, which I have never had; but some of them he must get into. All the companionship of boating and cricketing, and wine-parties, and supper parties, and all the reading in the world won't keep him from many a long hour of mawkishness, and discontent, and emptiness of heart; he feels that already himself. Am I sure of that, though? I may be only reading myself into him. At any rate, why should I have helped to trouble him before the time? Was that a friend's part? Well, he *must* face it, and the sooner the better

perhaps. At any rate it is done. But what a blessed thing if one can only help a youngster like this to fight his own way through the cold clammy atmosphere which is always hanging over him, ready to settle down on him – can help to keep some living faith in him, that the world, Oxford and all, isn't a respectable piece of machinery set going some centuries back! Ah! It's an awful business, that temptation to believe, or think you believe, in a dead God. It has nearly broken my back a score of times. What are all the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil to this? It includes them all. Well, I believe I can help him, and, please God, I will, if he will only let me; and the very sight of him does me good; so I won't believe we went down the lasher together for nothing."

And so at last Hardy finished his walk, took down a volume of Don Quixote from his shelves, and sat down for an hour's enjoyment before turning in.

CHAPTER VI
HOW DRYSDALE AND BLAKE WENT FISHING

"Drysdale, what's a servitor?"

"How the deuce should I know?"

This short and pithy dialogue took place in Drysdale's rooms one evening soon after the conversation recorded in the last chapter. He and Tom were sitting alone there, for a wonder, and so the latter seized the occasion to propound this question, which he had had on his mind for some time. He was scarcely satisfied with the above rejoinder, but while he was thinking how to come at the subject by another road, Drysdale opened a morocco fly-book, and poured its contents on the table, which was already covered with flies of all sorts and patterns, hanks of gut, delicate made-up casts, reels, minnows, and tackle enough to kill all the fish in the four neighboring counties. Tom began turning them over and scrutinizing the dressings of the flies.

"It has been so mild, the fish must be in season don't you think? Besides, if they're not, it's a jolly drive to Fairford at any rate. You've never been behind my team Brown. You'd better come, now, to-morrow."

"I can't cut my two lectures."

"Bother your lectures! Put on an aeger, then."

"No! that doesn't suit my book, you know."

"I can't see why you should be so cursedly particular. Well, if you won't, you won't; I know that well enough. But what cast shall you fish with to-morrow?"

"How many flies do you use?"

"Sometimes two, sometimes three."

"Two's enough, I think; all depends on the weather; but, if it's at all like today, you can't do better, I should think, than the old March brown and a palmer to begin with. Then, for change, this hare's ear, and an alder fly, perhaps; or, – let me see," and he began searching the glittering heap to select a color to go with the dull hare's ear.

"Isn't it early for the alder?" said Drysdale.

"Rather, perhaps; but they can't resist it."

"These bang-tailed little sinners any good?" said Drysdale, throwing some cock-a-bondies across the table.

"Yes; I never like to be without them, and a governor or two. Here, this is a well-tied lot," said Tom, picking out half a-dozen. "You never know when you may not kill with either of them. But I don't know the Fairford water; so my opinion isn't worth much."

Tom soon returned to the old topic.

"But now, Drysdale, you must know what a servitor is."

"Why should I? Do you mean one of our college servitors?"

"Yes?"

"Oh, something in the upper-servant line. I should put him above the porter, and below the cook, and butler. He does the

don's dirty work, and gets their broken victuals, and I believe he pays no college fees."

Tom rather drew into himself at this insolent and offhand definition. He was astonished and hurt at the tone of his friend. However, presently, he resolved to go through with it, and began again.

"But servitors are gentlemen, I suppose?"

"A good deal of the cock-tail about them, I should think. But I have not the honor of any acquaintance amongst them."

"At any rate, they are undergraduates, are not they?"

"Yes."

"And may take degrees, just like you or me?"

"They may have all the degrees to themselves, for anything I care. I wish they would let one pay a servitor for passing little-go for one. It would be deuced comfortable. I wonder it don't strike the dons, now; they might get clever beggars for servitors, and farm them, and so make loads of tin."

"But, Drysdale, seriously, why should you talk like that? If they can take all the degrees we can, and are, in fact, just what we are, undergraduates, I can't see why they're not as likely to be gentlemen as we. It can surely make no difference, their being poor men?"

"It must make them devilish uncomfortable," said the incorrigible payer of double fees, getting up to light his cigar.

"The name ought to carry respect here, at any rate. The Black Prince was an Oxford man, and he thought the noblest motto he

could take was, 'Ich dien,' I serve."

"If he were here now, he would change it for 'Je paye.'"

"I often wish you would tell me what you really and truly think, Drysdale."

"My dear fellow I am telling you what I do really think. Whatever the Black Prince might be pleased to observe if he were here, I stick to my motto. I tell you the thing to be able to do here at Oxford is – to pay."

"I don't believe it."

"I knew you wouldn't."

"I don't believe you do either."

"I do, though. But what makes you so curious about servitors?"

"Why, I made friends with Hardy, one of our servitors. He is such a fine fellow!"

I am sorry to relate that it cost Tom an effort to say this to Drysdale, but he despised himself that it was so.

"You should have told me so, before you began to pump me," said Drysdale. "However, I partly suspected something of the sort. You've a good bit of a Quixote in you. But really, Brown," he added, seeing Tom redden and look angry, "I'm sorry if what I said pained you. I daresay this friend of yours is a gentleman, and all you say."

"He is more of a gentleman by a long way than most of the-"

"Gentlemen commoners, you were going to say. Don't crane at such a small fence on my account. I will put it in another way for you. He can't be a greater snob than many of them."

"Well, but why do you live with them so much, then?"

"Why? because they happen to do the things I like doing, and live up here as I like to live. I like hunting and driving, and drawing badgers, and playing cards, and good wine and cigars. They hunt and drive, and keep dogs and good cellars, and will play unlimited loo or Van John as long as I please."

"But I know you get very sick of all that often, for I've heard you say as much half-a-dozen times in the little time I've been here."

"Why, you don't want to deny me the Briton's privilege of grumbling, do you?" said Drysdale, as he flung his legs up on the sofa, crossing one over the other as he lounged on his back – his favorite attitude; "but suppose I am getting tired of it all – which I am not – what do you purpose as a substitute?"

"Take to boating. I know you could be in the first boat if you liked; I heard them say so at Smith's wine the other night."

"But what's to prevent my getting just as tired of that? Besides, it's such a grind. And then there's the bore of changing all one's habits."

"Yes, but it's such splendid hard work," said Tom, who was bent on making a convert of his friend.

"Just so; and that's just what I don't want; the 'books and work and healthful play' line don't suit my complaint. No, as my uncle says, 'a young fellow must sow his wild oats,' and Oxford seems a place especially set apart by Providence for that operation."

In all the wild range of accepted British maxims there is none,

take it for all in all, more thoroughly abominable than this one, as to the sowing of wild oats. Look at it on what side you will, and you can make nothing but a devil's maxim of it. What a man – be he young, old, or middle-aged – sows, *that*, and nothing else shall he reap. The one only thing to do with wild oats, is to put them carefully into the hottest part of the fire, and get them burnt to dust, every seed of them. If you sow them no matter in what ground, up they will come, with long tough roots like couch grass, and luxuriant stalks and leaves, as sure as there is a sun in heaven – a crop which it turns one's heart cold to think of. The devil, too, whose special crop they are, will see that they thrive, and you, and nobody else, will have to reap them; and no common reaping will get them out of the soil, which must be dug down deep again and again. Well for you if with all your care you can make the ground sweet again by your dying day. "Boys will be boys" is not much better, but that has a true side to it; but this encouragement to the sowing of wild oats, is simply devilish, for it means that a young man is to give way to the temptations and follow the lusts of his age. What are we to do with the wild oats of manhood and old age – with ambition, over-reaching the false weights, hardness, suspicion, avarice – if the wild oats of youth are to be sown, and not burnt? What possible distinction can be drawn between them? If we may sow the one, why not the other?

But to get back to our story. Tom went away from Drysdale's rooms that night (after they had sorted all the tackle, which was to accompany the fishing expedition, to their satisfaction)

in a disturbed state of mind. He was very much annoyed at Drysdale's way of talking, because he was getting to like the man. He was surprised and angry at being driven more and more to the conclusion that the worship of the golden calf was verily and indeed rampant in Oxford – side by side, no doubt, with much that was manly and noble, but tainting more or less the whole life of the place. In fact, what annoyed him most was, the consciousness that he himself was becoming an idolater. For he couldn't help admitting that he felt much more comfortable when standing in the quadrangles or strolling in the High Street with Drysdale in his velvet cap, and silk gown, and faultless get-up, than when doing the same things with Hardy in his faded old gown, shabby loose overcoat, and well-worn trousers. He wouldn't have had Hardy suspect the fact for all he was worth, and hoped to get over the feeling soon; but there it was unmistakably. He wondered whether Hardy had ever felt anything of the kind himself.

Nevertheless, these thoughts did not hinder him from sleeping soundly, or from getting up an hour earlier than usual to go and see Drysdale start on his expedition.

Accordingly, he was in Drysdale's rooms next morning betimes, and assisted at the early breakfast which was going on there. Blake was the only other man present. He was going with Drysdale, and entrusted Tom with a message to Miller and the Captain, that he could not pull in the boat that day, but would pay a waterman to take his place. As soon as the

gate opened, the three, accompanied by the faithful Jack, and followed by Drysdale's scout, bearing overcoats, a splendid water-proof apron lined with fur, and the rods and reels, sallied out of the college, and sought the livery stables, patronized by the men of St. Ambrose's. Here they found a dog cart all ready in the yard, with a strong Roman-nosed, vicious-looking, rat-tailed horse in the shafts, called Satan by Drysdale; the leader had been sent on to the first turnpike. The things were packed, and Jack, the bull-dog, hoisted into the interior in a few minutes; Drysdale produced a long straight horn, which he called his yard of tin (probably because it was made of brass), and after refreshing himself with a blast or two, handed it over to Blake, and then mounted the dog cart, and took the reins. Blake seated himself by his side; the help who was to accompany them got up behind, and Jack looked wisely out from his inside place over the back-board.

"Are we all right?" said Drysdale, catching his long tandem whip into a knowing double thong.

"All right, sir," said the head ostler, touching his cap.

"You'd better have come, my boy," said Drysdale to Tom, as they trotted off out of the yard; and Tom couldn't help envying them as he followed, and watched the dog cart lessening rapidly down the empty street, and heard the notes of the yard of tin, which Blake managed to make really musical, borne back on the soft western breeze. It was such a pleasant morning for fishing.

However, it was too late to repent, had he wished it; and so he

got back to chapel, and destroyed the whole effect of the morning service on Miller's mind, by delivering Blake's message to that choleric coxswain as soon as chapel was over. Miller vowed for the twentieth time that Blake should be turned out of the boat, and went off to the Captain's rooms to torment him, and consult what was to be done.

The weather continued magnificent – a soft, dull grey March day, and a steady wind; and the thought of the lucky fishermen, and visions of creels filled with huge three-pounders, haunted Tom at lecture, and throughout the day.

At two o'clock he was down at the river. The college eight was to go down for the first time in the season to the reached below Nuneham, for a good training pull, and he had notice, to his great joy, that he was to be tried in the boat. But, great, no doubt, as was the glory, the price was a heavy one. This was the first time he had been subjected to the tender mercies of Miller, the coxswain, or had pulled behind the Captain; and it did not take long to convince him that it was a very different style of thing from anything he had as yet been accustomed to in the freshman's crew. The long steady sweep of the so-called paddle tried him almost as much as the breathless strain of the spurt.

Miller, too, was in one of his most relentless moods. He was angry at Blake's desertion, and seemed to think that Tom had something to do with it, though he simply delivered the message which had been entrusted to him; and so, though he distributed rebuke and objurgation to every man in the boat

except the Captain, he seemed to our hero to take particular delight in working him. There he stood in the stern, the fiery little coxswain, leaning forward with a tiller-rope in each hand, and bending to every stroke, shouting his warnings, and rebukes, and monitions to Tom, till he drove him to his wits' end. By the time the boat came back to Hall's, his arms were so numb that he could hardly tell whether his oar was in or out of his hand; his legs were stiff and aching, and every muscle in his body felt as if it had been pulled out an inch or two. As he walked up to College, he felt as if his shoulders and legs had nothing to do with one another; in short, he had had a very hard day's work, and, after going fast asleep at a wine-party, and trying in vain to rouse himself by a stroll in the streets, fairly gave in about ten o'clock and went to bed without remembering to sport his oak.

For some hours he slept the sleep of the dead, but at last began to be conscious of voices, and the clicking of glasses, and laughter, and scraps of songs; and after turning himself once or twice in bed, to ascertain whether he was awake or no, rubbed his eyes, sat up, and became aware that something very entertaining to the parties concerned was going on in his sitting-room. After listening for a minute, he jumped up, threw on his shooting-coat, and appeared at the door of his own sitting-room, where he paused a moment to contemplate the scene which met his astonished vision. His fire recently replenished, was burning brightly in the grate, and his candles on the table on which stood his whisky bottle, and tumblers, and hot water. On his sofa, which

had been wheeled round before the fire, reclined Drysdale, on his back, in his pet attitude, one leg crossed over the other, with a paper in his hand, from which he was singing, and in the arm-chair sat Blake, while Jack was coiled on the rug, turning himself every now and then in a sort of uneasy protest against his master's untimely hilarity. At first, Tom felt inclined to be angry, but the jolly shout of laughter with which Drysdale received him, as he stepped out into the light in night-shirt, shooting-coat, and dishevelled hair, appeased him at once.

"Why, Brown, you don't mean to say you have been in bed this last half-hour? We looked into the bed-room, and thought it was empty. Sit down, old fellow, and make yourself at home. Have a glass of grog; it's first-rate whisky."

"Well you're a couple of cool hands, I must say," said Tom. "How did you get in?"

"Through the door, like honest men," said Drysdale. "You're the only good fellow in college to-night. When we got back our fires were out, and we've been all round the college, and found all the oaks sported but yours. Never sport your oak, old boy; it's a bad habit. You don't know what time in the morning you may entertain angels unawares."

"You're a rum pair of angels, anyhow," said Tom, taking his seat on the sofa. "But what o'clock is it?"

"Oh, about half-past one," said Drysdale. "We've had a series of catastrophes. Never got into college till near one. I thought we should never have waked that besotted little porter. However,

here we are at last, you see, all right."

"So it seems," said Tom; "but how about the fishing?"

"Fishing! We've never thrown a fly all day," said Drysdale.

"He is so cursedly conceited about his knowledge of the country," struck in Blake. "What with that, and his awful twist, and his incurable habit of gossiping, and his blackguard dog, and his team of a devil and a young female – "

"Hold your scandalous tongue," shouted Drysdale. "To hear *you*talking of my twist, indeed; you ate four chops and a whole chicken to-day, at dinner, to your own cheek, you know."

"That's quite another thing," said Blake. "I like to see a fellow an honest grubber at breakfast and dinner; but you've always got your nose in the manger. That's how we all got wrong to-day, Brown. You saw what a breakfast he ate before starting; well, nothing would satisfy him but another at Whitney. There we fell in with a bird in mahogany tops, and, as usual, Drysdale began chumming with him. He knew all about the fishing of the next three counties. I daresay he did. My private belief is, that he is one of the Hungerford town council, who let the fishing there; at any rate, he swore it was no use our going to Fairford; the only place where fish would be in season was Hungerford. Of course Drysdale swallowed it all, and nothing would serve him but that we should turn off for Hungerford at once. Now, I did go once to Hungerford races, and I ventured to suggest that we should never get near the place. Not a bit of use; he knew every foot of the country. It was then about nine; he would guarantee that we

should be there by twelve, at latest."

"So we should have been, but for accidents," struck in Drysdale.

"Well, at any rate, what we did was to drive into Farringdon, instead of Hungerford, both horses dead done up, at twelve o'clock, after missing our way about twenty times."

"Because you would put in your oar," said Drysdale.

"Then grub again," went on Blake, "and an hour to bait the horses. I knew we were as likely to get to Jericho as to Hungerford. However, he would start; but, luckily, about two miles from Farringdon, old Satan bowled quietly into a bank, broke a shaft, and deposited us then and there. He wasn't such a fool as to be going to Hungerford at that time of day; the first time in his wicked old life that I ever remember seeing him do anything that pleased me."

"Come, now," said Drysdale, "do you mean to say you ever sat behind a better wheeler, when he's in a decent temper?"

"Can't say," said Blake; "never sat behind him in a good temper, that I can remember."

"I'll trot him five miles out and home in a dog-cart, on any road out of Oxford, against any horse you can bring, for a fiver."

"Done!" said Blake.

"But were you upset?" said Tom. "How did you get into the bank?"

"Why, you see," said Drysdale, "Jessy, – that's the little blood-mare, my leader, – is very young, and as shy and skittish as the

rest of her sex. We turned a corner sharp, and came right upon a gipsy encampment. Up she went into the air in a moment, and then turned right around and came head on at the cart. I gave her the double thong across her face to send her back again, and Satan, seizing the opportunity, rushed against the bank, dragging her with him, and snapping the shaft."

"And so ended our day's fishing," said Blake. "And next moment out jumps that brute Jack, and pitches into the gipsy's dog, who had come up very naturally to have a look at what was going on. Down jumps Drysdale to see that his beast gets fair play, leaving me and the help to look after the wreck, and keep his precious wheeler from kicking the cart into little pieces."

"Come, now," said Drysdale, "you must own we fell on our legs after all. Hadn't we a jolly afternoon? I'm thinking of turning tramp, Brown. We spent three or four hours in that camp, and Blake got spooney on a gipsy girl, and has written I don't know how many songs on them. Didn't you hear us singing them just now?"

"But how did you get the cart mended?" said Tom.

"Oh, the tinker patched up the shaft for us, – a cunning old beggar, the *pere de famille* of the encampment; up to every move on the board. He wanted to have a deal with me for Jessy. But 'pon my honor, we had a good time of it. There was the old tinker, mending the shaft, in his fur cap, with a black pipe, one inch long, sticking out of his mouth; and the old brown parchment of a mother, with her head in a red handkerchief, smoking a ditto pipe

to the tinker's, who told our fortunes, and talked like a printed book. Then there was his wife, and the slip of a girl who bowled over Blake there, and half a dozen ragged brats; and a fellow on a tramp, not a gipsy – some runaway apprentice, I take it, but a jolly dog – with no luggage but an old fiddle on which he scraped away uncommonly well, and set Blake making rhymes as we sat in the tent. You never heard any of his songs. Here's one for each of us; we're going to get up the characters and sing them about the country; – now for a rehearsal; I'll be the tinker."

"No, you must take the servant girl," said Blake.

"Well, we'll toss up for characters when the time comes. You begin then; here's a song," and he handed one of the papers to Blake, who began singing —

"Squat on a green plot,
We scorn a bench or settle, oh.
Plying or trying,
A spice of every trade;
Razors we grind,
Ring a pig, or mend a kettle, oh;
Come, what d'ye lack?
Speak it out, my pretty maid.

"I'll set your scissors, while
My granny tells you plainly!
Who stole your barley meal,
Your butter or your heart;
Tell if your husband will

Be handsome or ungainly,
Ride in a coach and four, or
Rough it in a cart."

"Enter Silly Sally; that's I, for the present you see," said Drysdale; and he began —

"Oh, dear! what can the matter be?
Dear, dear! what can the matter be?
Oh, dear! what can the matter be?
All in a pucker be I;

I'm growing uneasy about Billy Martin,
For love is a casualty desper't unsartin.
Law! yonder's the gipsy as tells folk's fortin;
I'm half in the mind for to try."

"Then you must be the old gipsy woman, Mother Patrico; here's your part Brown."

"But what's the tune?" said Tom.

"Oh, you can't miss it; go ahead;" and so Tom, who was dropping into the humour of the thing, droned out from the MS. handed to him —

"Chairs to mend,
Old chairs to mend,
Rush bottom'd cane bottom'd,
Chairs to mend.

Maid, approach,
If thou wouldst know
What the stars
May deign to show."

"Now, tinker," said Drysdale, nodding at Blake, who rattled on, —

"Chance feeds us, chance leads us;
Round the land in jollity;
Rag-dealing, nag-stealing,
Everywhere we roam;
Brass mending, ass vending,
Happier than the quality;
Swipes soaking, pipes smoking,
Ev'ry barn a home;
Tink, tink, a tink a tink,
Our life is full of fun, boys;
Clink tink, a tink a tink,
Our busy hammers ring;
Clink, tink, a tink a tink,
Our job will soon be done boys;
Then tune we merrily
The bladder and the string."

DRYSDALE, as *Silly Sally*.

"Oh, dear! what can the matter be?

Dear, dear! what can the matter be?
Oh, dear! what can the matter be?
There's such a look in her eye.

Oh, lawk! I declare I be all of a tremble;
My mind it misgives me about Sukey Wimble,
A splatter faced wench neither civil nor nimble
She'll bring Billy to beggary."

TOM, as *Mother Patrico*.

"Show your hand;
Come show your hand!
Would you know
What fate has planned?
Heaven forefend,
Ay, heav'n forefend!
What may these
Cross lines portend?"

BLAKE, as *the Tinker*.

"Owl, pheasant, all's pleasant,
Nothing comes amiss to us;
Hare, rabbit, snare, nab it;
Cock, or hen, or kite;
Tom cat, with strong fat,
A dainty supper is to us;
Hedge-hog and sedge-frog

To stew is our delight;
Bow, wow, with angry bark
My lady's dog assails us;
We sack him up, and clap
A stopper on his din.
Now pop him in the pot;
His store of meat avails us;
Wife cook him nice and hot,
And granny tans his skin."

DRYSDALE, as *Silly Sally*.

"Oh, lawk! what a calamity!
Oh, my! what a calamity!
Oh, dear! what a calamity!
Lost and forsaken be I.

I'm out of my senses, and nought will content me,
But pois'ning Poll Ady who helped circumvent me;
Come tell me the means, for no power shall prevent me:
Oh, give me revenge, or die."

TOM, as *Mother Patrico*

"Pause awhile!
Anon, anon!
Give me time
The stars to con.
True love's course

Shall yet run smooth;
True shall prove
The favor'd youth."

BLAKE, as *the Tinker*.

"Tink tink, a tink a tink,
We'll work and then get tipsy, oh!
Clink tink, on each chink,
Our busy hammers ring.
Tink tink, a tink a tink,
How merry lives a gypsy, oh!
Chanting and ranting;
As happy as a king."

DRYSDALE, as *Silly Sally*.

"Joy! Joy! all will end happily!
Joy! Joy! all will end happily!
Joy! joy! all will end happily!
Bill will be constant to I.

Oh, thankee, good dame, here's my purse and my thimble;
A fig for Poll Ady and fat Sukey Wimble;
I now could jump over the steeple so nimble;
With joy I be ready to cry."

TOM, as *Mother Patrico*.

"William shall
Be rich and great;
And shall prove
A constant mate.
Thank not me,
But thank your fate,
On whose high
Decrees I wait."

"Well, won't that do? won't it bring the house down? I'm going to send for dresses to London, and we'll start next week."

"What, on the tramp, singing these songs?"

"Yes; we'll begin in some out-of-the-way place till we get used to it."

"And end in the lock-up, I should say," said Tom; "it'll he a good lark, though. Now, you haven't told me how you got home."

"Oh, we left camp at about five-"

"The tinker having extracted a sovereign from Drysdale," interrupted Blake.

"What did you give to the little gypsy yourself?" retorted Drysdale; "I saw your adieus under the thorn-bush. – Well, we got on all right to old Murdock's, at Kingston Inn, by about seven, and there we had dinner; and after dinner the old boy came in. He and I are great chums, for I'm often there, and always ask him in. But that beggar Blake, who never saw him before, cut me clean out in five minutes. Fancy his swearing he is Scotch, and that an ancestor of his in the sixteenth century married a Murdock!"

"Well, when you come to think what a lot of ancestors one must have had at that time, it's probably true," said Blake.

"At any rate, it took," went on Drysdale. "I thought old Murdock would have wept on his neck. As it was, he scattered snuff enough to fill a pint pot over him out of his mull, and began talking Gaelic. And Blake had the cheek to jabber a lot of gibberish back to him, as if he understood every word."

"Gibberish! it was the purest Gaelic," said Blake laughing.

"I heard a lot of Greek words myself," said Drysdale; "but old Murdock was too pleased at hearing his own clapper going, and too full of whisky, to find him out."

"Let alone that I doubt whether he remembers more than about five words of his native tongue himself," said Blake.

"The old boy got so excited that he went up stairs for his plaid and dirk, and dressed himself up in them, apologising that he could not appear in the full grab of old Gaul, in honor of his new-found relative, as his daughter had cut up his old kilt for 'trews for the barnies' during his absence from home. Then they took to more toddy and singing Scotch songs, till at eleven o'clock they were standing on their chairs, right hands clasped, each with one foot on the table, glasses in the other hands, the toddy flying over the room as they swayed about roaring like maniacs, what was it? – oh, I have it:

'Wug-an-toorey all agree,
Wug-an-toorey, wug-an-toorey.'"

"He hasn't told you that he tried to join us, and tumbled over the back of his chair into the dirty-plate basket."

"A libel! a libel!" shouted Drysdale; "the leg of my chair broke, and I stepped down gracefully and safely, and when I looked up and saw what a tottery performance it was, I concluded to give them a wide berth. It would be no joke to have old Murdock topple over on to you. I left them 'wug-an-tooreying,' and went out to look after the trap, which was ordered to be at the door at half-past ten. I found Murdock's ostler very drunk, but sober compared with that rascally help whom we had been fools enough to take with us. They had got the trap out and the horses in, but that old rascal Satan was standing so quiet that I suspected something wrong. Sure enough, when I came to look, they had him up to the cheek on one side of his mouth, and third bar on the other, his belly-band buckled across his back, and no kicking strap. The old brute was chuckling to himself what he would do with us as soon as we had started in that trim. It took half an hour getting all right, as I was the only one able to do anything."

"Yes, you would have said so," said Blake, "if you had seen him trying to put Jack up behind. He made six shots with the old dog, and dropped him about on his head and the broad of his back as if he had been a bundle of ells."

"The fact is, that that rascally ostler had made poor old Jack drunk too," explained Drysdale, "and he wouldn't be lifted straight. However we got off at last, and hadn't gone a mile before

the help (who was maundering away some cursed sentimental ditty or other behind), lurched more heavily than usual, and pitched off into the night somewhere. Blake looked for him for half-an-hour, and couldn't find a hair."

"You don't mean to say the man tumbled off and you never found him?" said Tom in horror.

"Well, that's about the fact," said Drysdale; "but it isn't so bad as you think. We had no lamps, and it was an uncommon bad night for running by holloas."

"But a first-rate night for running by scent," broke in Blake; "the fellow leant against me until he made his exit, and I'd have backed myself to have hit the scent again half-a-mile off if the wind had only been right."

"He may have broken his neck," said Tom.

"Can a fellow sing with a broken neck?" said Drysdale; "hanged if I know! But don't I tell you, we heard him maundering on somewhere or other? And when Blake shouted, he rebuked him piously out of the pitch darkness, and told him to go home and repent. I nearly dropped off the box laughing at them; and then he 'uplifted his testimony,' as he called it, against me, for driving a horse called Satan. I believe he's a ranting methodist spouter."

"I tried hard to find him," said Blake; "For I should dearly have liked to kick him safely into the ditch."

"At last Black Will himself couldn't have held Satan another minute. So Blake scrambled up, and away we came, and knocked

into college at one for a finish: the rest you know."

"Well, you've had a pretty good day of it," said Tom, who had been hugely amused; "but I should feel nervous about the help, if I were you."

"Oh, he'll come to no grief, I'll be bound," said Drysdale, "but what o'clock is it?"

"Three," said Blake, looking at his watch and getting up; "time to turn in."

"The first time I ever heard you say that," said Drysdale.

"Yes; but you forget we were up this morning before the world was aired. Good night, Brown."

And off the two went, leaving Tom to sport his oak this time, and retire in wonder to bed.

Drysdale was asleep, with Jack curled up on the foot of the bed, in ten minutes. Blake, by the help of wet towels and a knotted piece of whipcord round his forehead, read Pinder till the chapel bell began to ring.

CHAPTER VII
AN EXPLOSION

Our hero soon began to feel that he was contracting his first college friendship. The great, strong, badly-dressed, badly-appointed servitor, who seemed almost at the same time utterly reckless of, and nervously alive to, the opinion of all around him, with his bursts of womanly tenderness and Berserker rage, alternating like storms and sunshine of a July day on a high moorland, his keen sense of humor and appreciation of all the good things of life, the use and enjoyment of which he was so steadily denying himself from high principle, had from the first seized powerfully on all Tom's sympathies, and was daily gaining more hold upon him.

Blessed is the man who has the gift of making friends; for it is one of God's best gifts. It involves many things, but above all, the power of going out of oneself, and seeing and appreciating whatever is noble and living in another man.

But even to him who has the gift, it is often a great puzzle to find out whether a man is really a friend or not. The following is recommended as a test in the case of any man about whom you are not quite sure; especially if he should happen to have more of this world's goods, either in the shape of talents, rank or money, or what not, than you.

Fancy the man stripped stark naked of every thing in the world, except an old pair of trousers and a shirt, for decency's sake, without even a name to him, and dropped down in the middle of Holborn or Piccadilly, Would you go up to him then and there, and lead him out from amongst the cabs and omnibuses, and take him to your own home and feed him and clothe him, and stand by him against all the world, to your last sovereign, and your last leg of mutton? If you wouldn't do this you have no right to call him by the sacred name of friend. If you would, the odds are that he would do the same by you, and you may count yourself a rich man. For, probably were friendship expressible by, or convertible into, current coin of the realm, one such friend would be worth to a man, at least 100,000L. How many millionaires are there in England? I can't even guess; but more by a good many, I fear, than there are men who have ten real friends. But friendship is not expressible or convertible. It is more precious than wisdom; and wisdom "cannot be gotten for gold, nor shall rubies be mentioned in comparison thereof." Not all the riches that ever came out of earth and sea are worth the assurance of one such real abiding friendship in your heart of hearts.

But for the worth of a friendship commonly so called – meaning thereby a sentiment founded on the good dinners, good stories, opera stalls, and days' hooting you have gotten or hope to get out of a man, the snug things in his gift, and his powers of procuring enjoyment of one kind or another to miserable body

or intellect – why, such a friendship as that is to be appraised easily enough, if you find it worth your while; but you will have to pay your pound of flesh for it one way or another – you may take your oath of that. If you follow my advice, you will take a 10L note down, and retire to your crust of bread and liberty.

Tom was rapidly falling into friendship with Hardy. He was not bound hand and foot and carried away captive yet, but he was already getting deep in the toils.

One evening he found himself as usual at Hardy's door about eight o'clock. The oak was open, but he got no answer when he knocked at the inner door. Nevertheless he entered, having quite got over all shyness or ceremony by this time. The room was empty, but two tumblers and the black bottle stood on the table, and the kettle was hissing away on the hob. "Ah," thought Tom, "he expects me, I see;" so he turned his back to the fire and made himself at home. A quarter of an hour passed, and still Hardy did not return. "Never knew him out so long before at this time of night," thought Tom. "Perhaps he's at some party. I hope so. It would do him a good deal of good; and I know he might go out if he liked. Next term, see if I won't make him more sociable. It's a stupid custom that freshmen don't give parties in their first term, or I'd do it at once. Why won't he be more sociable? No, after all sociable isn't the word; he's a very sociable fellow at bottom. What in the world is it that he wants?"

And so Tom balanced himself on the two hind legs of one of the Windsor chairs, and betook himself to pondering what

it was exactly which ought to be added to Hardy to make him an unexceptional object of hero-worship; when the man himself came suddenly into the room, slamming his oak behind him, and casting his cap and gown fiercely on to the sofa before he noticed our hero.

Tom jumped up at once. "My dear fellow, what's the matter?" he said; "I'm sorry I came in; shall I go?"

"No – don't go – sit down," said Hardy, abruptly; and then began to smoke fast without saying another word.

Tom waited a few minutes watching for him, and then broke silence again. —

"I am sure something is the matter, Hardy; you look dreadfully put out – what is it?"

"What is it?" said Hardy, bitterly; "Oh, nothing at all – nothing at all; a gentle lesson to servitors as to the duties of their position; not pleasant, perhaps, for a youngster to swallow; but I ought to be used to such things at any rate by this time. I beg your pardon for seeming put out."

"Do tell me what it is," said Tom. "I'm sure I am very sorry for anything which annoys you."

"I believe you are," said Hardy, looking at him, "and I'm much obliged to you for it. What do you think of that fellow Chanter's offering Smith, the junior servitor, a boy just come up, a bribe of ten pounds to prick him in at chapel when he isn't there?"

"The dirty blackguard," said Tom; "by Jove he ought to be cut. He will be cut, won't he? You don't mean that he really did

offer him the money?"

"I do," said Hardy, "and the poor little fellow came here after hall to ask me what he should do with tears in his eyes."

"Chanter ought to be horsewhipped in quad," said Tom.

"I will go and call on Smith directly. What did you do?"

"Why, as soon as I could master myself enough not to lay hands on him," said Hardy, "I went across to his rooms where he was entertaining a select party, and just gave him his choice between writing an abject apology then and there to my dictation, or having the whole business laid before the principal to-morrow morning. He chose the former alternative, and I made him write such a letter as I don't think he will forget in a hurry."

"That's good," said Tom; "but he ought to have been horsewhipped too. It makes one's fingers itch to think of it. However, Smith's all right now."

"All right!" said Hardy, bitterly. "I don't know what you call 'all right.' Probably the boy's self-respect is hurt for life. You can't salve over this sort of thing with an apology-plaster."

"Well, I hope it isn't so bad as that," said Tom.

"Wait till you've tried it yourself," said Hardy, "I'll tell you what it is; one or two things of this sort – and I've seen many more than that in my time – sink down into you, and leave marks like a red-hot iron."

"But, Hardy, now, really, did you ever know a bribe offered before?" said Tom.

Hardy thought for a moment. "No," said he, "I can't say that

I have; but things as bad, or nearly as bad, often." He paused a minute, and then went on; "I tell you, if it were not for my dear old father, who would break his heart over it, I would cut the whole concern to-morrow. I've been near doing it twenty times, and enlisting in a good regiment."

"Would it be any better there, though?" said Tom, gently, for he felt that he was in a gunpowder magazine.

"Better! yes, it must be better," said Hardy; "at any rate the youngsters there are marchers and fighters; besides, one would be in the ranks and know one's place. Here one is by way of being a gentleman – God save the mark! A young officer, be he never such a fop or profligate, must take his turn at guard, and carry his life in his hand all over the world wherever he is sent, or he has to leave the service. Service! – yes, that's the word; that's what makes every young red-coat respectable, though he mayn't think it. He is serving his Queen, his country – the devil, too, perhaps – very likely – but still the other is some sort. He is bound to it, sworn to it, must do it; more or less. But a youngster up here, with health, strength, and heaps of money – bound to no earthly service, and choosing that of the devil and his own lusts, because some service or other he must have – I want to know where else under the sun you can see such a sight as that?"

Tom mumbled something to the effect that it was by no means necessary that men at Oxford, either rich or poor, need embark in the service which had been alluded to; which remark, however, only seemed to add fuel to the fire. For Hardy now rose from his

chair, and began striding up and down the room, his right arm behind his back, the hand gripping his left elbow, his left hand brought round in front close to his body, and holding the bowl of his pipe, from which he was blowing off clouds in puffs like an engine just starting with a heavy train. The attitude was one of a man painfully trying to curb himself. His eyes burnt like coals under his deep brows. The man altogether looked awful, and Tom felt particularly uncomfortable and puzzled. After a turn or two, Hardy burst out again —

"And who are they, I should like to know, these fellows who dare to offer bribes to gentlemen? How do they live? What do they do for themselves or for this University? By heaven, they are ruining themselves body and soul, and making this place, which was meant for the training of learned and brave and righteous Englishmen, a lie and a snare. And who tries to stop them? Here and there a don is doing his work like a man; the rest are either washing their hands of the business, and spending their time in looking after those who don't want looking after, and cramming those who would be better without the cramming, or else standing by, cap in hand, and shouting, 'Oh young men of large fortune and great connexions! You future dispensers of the good things of this Realm, come to our colleges and all shall be made pleasant!' and the shout is taken up by undergraduates, and tradesmen, and horse-dealers, and cricket-cads, and dog-fanciers 'Come to us, and us, and us, and we will be your toadies!' Let them; let them toady and cringe to their precious idols, till they

bring this noble old place down about their ears. Down it will come, down it must come, for down it ought to come, if it can find nothing better to worship than rank, money, and intellect. But to live in the place and love it too, and to see all this going on, and groan and writhe under it, and not be able-"

At this point in his speech Hardy came to the turning-point in his march at the farther end of the room, just opposite his crockery cupboard; but, instead of turning as usual, he paused, let go the hold on his left elbow, poised himself for a moment to get a purchase, and then dashed his right fist full against one of the panels. Crash went the slight deal boards, as if struck with a sledge-hammer, and crash went glass and crockery behind. Tom jumped to his feet, in doubt whether an assault on him would not follow, but the fit was over, and Hardy looked round at him with a rueful and deprecating face. For a moment Tom tried to look solemn and heroic, as befitted the occasion; but somehow, the sudden contrast flashed upon him, and sent him off, before he could think about it, into a roar of laughter, ending in a violent fit of coughing; for in his excitement he had swallowed a mouthful of smoke. Hardy, after holding out for a moment, gave in to the humour of the thing, and the appealing look passed into a smile, and the smile into a laugh, as he turned towards his damaged cupboard, and began opening it carefully in a legitimate manner.

"I say, old fellow," said Tom, coming up, "I should think you must find it an expensive amusement. Do you often walk into your cupboard like that?"

"You see, Brown, I am naturally a man of a very quick temper."

"So it seems" said Tom; "but doesn't it hurt your knuckles? I should have something softer put up for me if I were you; your bolster, with a velvet cap on it, or a doctor of divinity's gown, now."

"You be hanged," said Hardy, as he disengaged the last splinter, and gently opened the ill-used cupboard door. "Oh, thunder and turf, look here," he went on, as the state of affairs inside disclosed itself to his view; "how many times have I told that thief George never to put anything on this side of my cupboard! Two tumblers smashed to bits, and I've only four in the world. Lucky we had those two out on the table."

"And here's a great piece out of the sugar-basin, you see," said Tom, holding up the broken article; "and, let me see, one cup and three saucers gone to glory."

"Well, it's lucky it's no worse," said Hardy, peering over his shoulder; "I had a lot of odd saucers, and there's enough left to last my time. Never mind the smash, let's sit down again and be reasonable."

Tom sat down in high good humor. He felt himself more on an equality with his host than he had done before, and even thought he might venture on a little mild expostulation or lecturing. But while he was considering how to improve the occasion Hardy began himself.

"I shouldn't go so furious, Brown, if I didn't care about the

place so much. I can't bear to think of it as a sort of learning machine, in which I am to grind for three years to get certain degrees which I want. No – this place, and Cambridge, and our great schools, are the heart of dear old England. Did you ever read Secretary Cook's address to the Vice-Chancellor, Doctors, &c. in 1636 – more critical times, perhaps, even than ours? No? Well, listen then;" and he went to his bookcase, took down a book, and read; "'The very truth is, that all wise princes respect the welfare of their estates, and consider that schools and universities are (as in a body) the noble and vital parts, which being vigorous and sound send good blood and active spirits into the veins and arteries, which cause health and strength; or, if feeble or ill-affected, corrupt all the vital parts; whereupon grow diseases, and in the end, death itself.' A low standard up here for ten years may corrupt half the parishes in the kingdom."

"That's true," said Tom, "but-"

"Yes; and so one has a right to be jealous for Oxford. Every Englishman ought to be."

"But I really think, Hardy, that you're unreasonable," said Tom, who had no mind to be done out of his chance of lecturing his host.

"I am very quick-tempered," said Hardy, "as I told you just now."

"But you're not fair on the fast set up here. They can't help being rich men, after all."

"No; so one oughtn't to expect them to be going through the

eyes of needles, I suppose. But do you mean to say you ever heard of a more dirty, blackguard business than this?" said Hardy; "he ought to be expelled the University."

"I admit that," said Tom; "but it was only one of them, you know. I don't believe there's another man in the set who would have done it."

"Well, I hope not," said Hardy; "I may be hard on them – as you say, they can't help being rich. But, now, I don't want you to think me a violent one-sided fanatic; shall I tell you some of my experiences up here – some passages from the life of a servitor?"

"Do," said Tom, "I should like nothing so well."

CHAPTER VIII
HARDY'S HISTORY

"My father is an old commander in the Royal Navy. He was a second cousin of Nelson's Hardy, and that, believe, was what led him into the navy, for he had no interest whatever of his own. It was a visit which Nelson's Hardy, then a young lieutenant, paid to his relative, my grandfather, which decided my father, he has told me: but he always had a strong bent to the sea, though he was a boy of very studious habits.

"However, those were times when brave men who knew and loved their profession couldn't be overlooked, and my dear old father fought his way up step by step – not very fast certainly, but, still fast enough to keep him in heart about his chances in life. I can show you the accounts of some of the affairs he was in, in James's History, which you see up on my shelf there, or I could tell them you myself; but I hope some day, you will know him, and then you will hear them in perfection.

"My father was made commander towards the end of the war, and got a ship, which he sailed with a convoy of merchantmen from Bristol. It was the last voyage he ever made in active service; but the Admiralty was so well satisfied with his conduct in it that they kept his ship in commission two years after peace was declared. And well they might be; for in the Spanish main he

fought an action which lasted, on and off, for two days, with a French sloop of war, and a privateer, which he always thought was an American, either of which ought to have been a match for him. But he had been with Vincent in the *Arrow*, and was not likely to think much of such small odds as that. At any rate he beat them off, and not a prize could either of them make out of his convoy, though I believe his ship was never fit for anything afterwards, and was broken up as soon as she was out of commission. We have got her compasses, and the old flag which flew at the peak through the whole voyage, at home now. It was my father's own flag, and his fancy to have it always flying. More than half the men were killed, or badly hit – the dear old father amongst the rest. A ball took off part of his knee cap, and he had to fight the last six hours of the action sitting in a chair on the quarter-deck; but he says it made the men fight better than when he was among them, seeing him sitting there sucking oranges.

"Well, he came home with a stiff leg. The Bristol merchants gave him the freedom of the city in a gold box, and a splendidly-mounted sword with an inscription on the blade, which hangs over the mantel-piece at home. When I first left home, I asked him to give me his old service sword, which used to hang by the other, and he gave it me at once, though I was only a lad of seventeen, as he would give me his right eye, dear old father, which is the only one he has now; the other he lost from a cutlass wound in a boarding-party. There it hangs, and those are his epaulettes in the tin case. They used to lie under my pillow before

I had a room of my own, and many a cowardly down-hearted fit have they helped me to pull through, Brown; and many a mean act have they helped to keep me from doing. There they are always; and the sight of them brings home the dear old man to me as nothing else does, hardly even his letters. I must be a great scoundrel to go very wrong with such a father.

"Let's see – where was I? Oh, yes; I remember. Well, my father got his box and sword, and some very handsome letters from several great men. We have them all in a book at home, and I know them by heart. The ones he values most are from Collingwood, and his old captain, Vincent, and from his cousin Nelson's Hardy, who didn't come off very well himself after the war. But my poor old father never got another ship. For some time he went up every year to London, and was always, he says, very kindly received by the people in power, and often dined with one and another Lord of the Admiralty who had been an old messmate. But he was longing for employment; and it used to prey on him while he was in his prime to feel year after year slipping away and he still without a ship. But why should I abuse people, and think it hard, when he doesn't? 'You see, Jack,' he said to me the last time we spoke about it, 'after all I was a battered old hulk, lame and half blind. So was Nelson you'll say: but every man isn't a Nelson, my boy.

'And though I might think I could con or fight a ship as well as ever, I can't say other folk who didn't know me were wrong for not agreeing with me. Would you, now Jack, appoint a lame and

blind man to command your ship, if you had one?' But he left off applying for work as soon as he was fifty, (I just remember the time), for he began to doubt then whether he was quite so fit to command a vessel as a younger man; and, though he had a much better chance after that of getting a ship (for William IV came to the throne, who knew all about him), he never went near the Admiralty again. 'God forbid,' he said, 'that his Majesty should take me if there's a better man to be had.'

"But I have forgotten to tell you how I came into the world, and am telling you my father's story instead of my own. You seem to like hearing about it though, and you can't understand one without the other. However, when my father was made commander, he married, and bought, with his prize-money and savings, a cottage and piece of land, in a village on the south coast, where he left his wife when he went on his last voyage. They had waited some years, for neither of them had any money; but there never were two people who wanted it less, or did more good without it to all who came near them. They had a hard time of it too, for my father had to go on half-pay; and a commander's half-pay isn't much to live upon and keep a family. For they had a family; three besides me; but they are all gone. And my mother, too; she died when I was quite a boy, and left him and me alone; and since then I have never known what a woman's love is, for I have no near relations; and a man with such prospects as mine had better keep down all – However, there's no need to go into any notion; I won't wander any more if I can help it.

"I know my father was very poor when my mother died, and I think (though he never told me so) that he had mortgaged our cottage, and was very near having to sell it at one time. The expenses of my mother's illness had been very heavy; I know a good deal of the best furniture was sold – all, indeed except a handsome arm chair and a little work table of my mother's. She used to sit in the chair, in her last illness, on our lawn, and watch the sunsets. And he sat by her, and watched her, and sometimes read the Bible to her; while I played about with a big black dog we had then, named Vincent, after my father's old captain; or with Burt, his old boatswain, who came with his wife to live with my father before I can recollect, and lives with us still. He did everything in the garden, and about the house; and in the house, too, when his wife was ill, for he can turn his hand to most anything, like most old salts. It was he who rigged up the mast and weather-cock on the lawn, and used to let me run up the old flag on Sundays, and on my father's wedding-day, and on the anniversary of his action, and of Vincent's action in the Arrow.

"After my mother's death my father sent away all the servants, for the boatswain and his wife are more like friends. I was wrong to say that no woman has loved me since my mother's death, for I believe dear old nanny loves me as if I were her own child. My father, after this, used to sit silent for hours together, doing nothing but look over the sea, but, except for that, was not much changed. After a short time he took to teaching me to read, and from that time I never was away from him for an hour, except

when I was asleep, until I went out into the world.

"As I told you, my father was naturally fond of study. He had kept up the little Latin he had learnt as a boy, and had always been reading whatever he could lay his hands on; so that I couldn't have had a better tutor. They were no lessons to me, particularly the geographical ones; for there was no part of the world's sea-coast that he did not know, and could tell me what it and the people were like; and often when Burt happened to come in at such times, and heard what my father was talking about, he would give us some of his adventures and ideas of geography, which were very queer indeed.

"When I was nearly ten, a new vicar came. He was about my father's age and a widower, like him; only he had no child. Like him, too, he had no private fortune, and the living is a very poor one. He soon became very intimate with us, and made my father his churchwarden; and, after being present at some of our lessons, volunteered to teach me Greek, which, he said, it was time I should begin to learn.

"This was great relief to my father, who had bought a Greek grammar and dictionary, and a delectus, some time before; and I could see him often, dear old father, with his glass in his eye, puzzling away over them when I was playing, or reading Cook's Voyages, for it had grown to be the wish of his heart that I should be a scholar, and should go into orders. So he was going to teach me Greek himself, for there was no one in the parish except the Vicar who knew a word of anything but English – so that he

could not have got me a tutor, and the thought of sending me to school had never crossed his mind, even if he could have afforded to do either. My father only sat by at Greek lessons, and took no part; but first he began to put in a word here and there, and then would repeat words and sentences himself, and look over my book while I construed, and very soon was just as regular a pupil of the Vicar's as I.

"The Vicar was for the most part very proud of his pupils, and the kindest of masters; but every now and then be used to be hard on my father, which made me furious, though he never seemed to mind it. I used to make mistakes on purpose at those times to show that I was worse than he at any rate. But this only happened after we had had a political discussion at dinner; for we dined at three, and took to our Greek afterwards, to suit the Vicar's time, who was generally a guest. My father is a Tory, of course, as you may guess, and the Vicar was a Liberal, of a very mild sort, as I have since thought; a Whig of '88,' he used to call himself. But he was in favor of the Reform Bill, which was enough for my father, who lectured him about loyalty, and opening the flood-gates to revolution; and used to call up old Burt from the kitchen, where he was smoking his pipe, and ask him what he used to think of the Radicals on board ship; and Burt's regular reply was —

"'Skulks, yer honor, regular skulks. I wouldn't give the twist of a fiddler's elbow for all the lot of 'em as ever pretended to handle a swab, or handle a topsail.'

"The Vicar always tried to argue, but, as Burt and I were the

only audience, my father was always triumphant; only he took it out of us afterwards, at the Greek. Often I used to think, when they were reading history, and talking about the characters, that my father was much the more liberal of the two.

"About this time he bought a small half-decked boat of ten tons, for he and Burt agreed that I ought to learn to handle a boat, although I was not to go to sea; and when they got the Vicar in the boat on the summer evenings (for he was always ready for a sale though he was a very bad sailor), I believe they used to steer as near the wind as possible, and get into short chopping seas on purpose. But I don't think he was ever frightened, though he used sometimes to be very ill.

"And so I went on, learned all I could from my father, and the Vicar, and old Burt, till I was sixteen. By that time I had begun to think for myself; and I had made up my mind that it was time I should do something. No boy ever wanted to leave home less, I believe; but I saw that I must make a move if I was ever to be what my father wished me to be. So I spoke to the Vicar, and he quite agreed with me, and made inquiries amongst his acquaintance; and so, before I was seventeen, I was offered the place of under-master in a commercial school, about twenty miles from home. The Vicar brought the offer, and my father was very angry at first; but we talked him over, and so I took the situation.

"And I am very glad I did, although there were many drawbacks. The salary was 35L a year, and for that I had to drill all the boys in English, and arithmetic, and Latin, and to

teach the Greek grammar to the five or six who paid extra to learn it. Out of the school I had always to be with them, and was responsible for the discipline. It was weary work very often, and what seemed the worst part of it to me, at the time, was the trade spirit which leavened the whole of the establishment. The master and owner of the school, who was a keen vulgar man, but always civil enough to me, thought of nothing but what would pay. And this seemed to be what filled the school. Fathers sent their boys, because the place was so practical, and nothing was taught (except as extras) which was not to be of so-called real use to the boys in the world. We had our work quite clearly laid down for us; and it was, not to put the boys in the way of getting real knowledge or understanding, or any of the things Solomon talks about, but to put them in the way of getting on.

"I spent three years at that school, and in that time I rounded myself pretty well in Latin and Greek – better, I believe, than I should have done if I had been at a first-rate school myself; and I hope I did the boys some good, and taught some of them that cunning was not the best quality to start in life with. And I was not often very unhappy, for I could always look forward to my holidays with my father.

"However, I own that I never was better pleased than one Christmas when the Vicar came over to our cottage, and brought with him a letter from the Principal of St. Ambrose College, Oxford, appointing me to a servitorship. My father was even more delighted than I, and that evening produced a bottle of

old rum, which was part of his ship's stock, and had gone all through his action, and been in his cellar ever since. And we three in the parlor, and old Burt and his wife in the kitchen, finished it that night; the boatswain, I must own, taking the lion's share. The Vicar took occasion, in the course of the evening, to hint that it was only poor men who took these places at the University; and that I might find some inconvenience, and suffer some annoyance, by not being exactly in the same position as other men. But my dear old father would not hear of it; I was now going to be in amongst the very pick of English gentlemen – what could it matter whether I had money or not? That was the last thing which real gentlemen thought of. Besides, why was I to be so very poor? He should be able to allow me whatever would be necessary to make me comfortable. 'But, Jack,' he said suddenly, later in the evening, 'one meets low fellows everywhere. You have met them, I know, often at the confounded school, and will meet them again. Never you be ashamed of your poverty, my boy.' I promised readily enough, for I didn't think I could be more tried in that way than I had been already. I had lived for three years amongst people whose class notoriously measured all things by a money standard; now that was all over, I thought. It's easy making promises in the dark. The Vicar, however, would not let the matter rest; so we resolved ourselves into a Committee of Ways and Means, and my father engaged to lay before us an exact statement of his affairs next day. I went to the door with the Vicar, and he told me to come and see him in the morning.

"I half-guessed what he wanted to see me for. He knew all my father's affairs perfectly well, and wished to prepare me for what was to come in the evening. 'Your father,' he said, 'is one of the most liberal men I ever met; he is almost the only person who gives anything to the schools and other charities in this parish, and he gives to the utmost. You would not wish him, I know, to cut off these gifts, which bring the highest reward with them, when they are made in the spirit in which he makes them. Then he is getting old, and you would never like him to deny himself the comforts (and few enough they are) which he is used to. He has nothing but his half-pay to live on; and out of that he pays 50L a year for insurance; for he has insured his life, that you may have something besides the cottage and land when he dies. I only tell you this that you may know the facts beforehand. I am sure you would never take a penny from him if you could help it. But he won't be happy unless he makes you some allowance; and he can do it without crippling himself. He has been paying off an old mortgage on his property here for many years, by installments of 40L a year, and the last was paid last Michaelmas; so that it will not inconvenience him to make you that allowance. Now, you will not be able to live properly upon that at Oxford, even as a servitor. I speak to you now, my dear Jack, as your oldest friend (except Burt), and you must allow me the privilege of an old friend. I have more than I want, and I propose to make your allowance at Oxford to 80L a year, and upon that I think you may manage to get on. Now, it will not be quite candid, but I think,

under the circumstances, we shall be justified in representing to your father that 40L a year will be ample for him to allow you. You see what I mean?

"I remember almost word for word what the Vicar said; for it is not often in one's life that one meets with this sort of friend. At first I thanked him, but refused to take anything from him. I had saved enough, I said, to carry me through Oxford. But he would not be put off; and I found that his heart was as much set on making me an allowance himself as on saving my father. So I agreed to take 25L a year from him.

"When we met again in the evening, to hear my father's statement, it was as good as a play to see the dear old man, with his spectacles on and his papers before him, proving in some wonderful way that he could easily allow me at least 80L or 100L a year. I believe it cost the Vicar some twinges of conscience to persuade him that all I should want would be 40L a year; and it was very hard work; but at last we succeeded, and it was so settled. During the next three weeks the preparations for my start occupied us all. The Vicar looked out all the classics, which he insisted that I should take. There they stand on that middle shelf – all well bound, you see, and many of them old college prizes. My father made an expedition to the nearest town, and came back with a large new portmanteau and hat-box; and the next day the leading tailor came over to fit me out with new clothes. In fact, if I had not resisted stoutly, I should have come to college with half the contents of the cottage, and Burt as valet; for the old

boatswain was as bad as the other two. But I compromised the matter with him by accepting his pocket compass and the picture of the brig which hangs there; the two things, next to his wife, which he values, I believe, most in the world.

"Well, it is now two years last October since I came to Oxford as a servitor; so you see I have pretty, nearly finished my time here. I was more than twenty then – much older as you know, than most freshmen. I daresay it was partly owing to the difference in age, and partly to the fact that I knew no one when I came up, but mostly to my own bad management and odd temper, that I did not get on better than I have done with the men here. Sometimes I think that our college is a bad specimen, for I have made several friends amongst out-college men. At any rate, the fact is, as you have no doubt found out – and I hope I haven't tried at all to conceal it – that I am out of the pale, as it were. In fact, with the exception of one of the tutors, and one man who was a freshman with me, I do not know a man in college except as a mere speaking acquaintance.

"I had been rather thrown off my balance, I think, at the change in my life, for at first I made a great fool of myself. I had believed too readily what my father had said, and thought that at Oxford I should see no more of what I had been used to. Here I thought that the last thing a man would be valued by would be the length of his purse, and that no one would look down upon me because I performed some services to the college in return for my keep, instead of paying for it in money.

"Yes, I made a great fool of myself, no doubt of that; and, what is worse, I broke my promise to my father – I often *was* ashamed of my poverty, and tried at first to hide it, for somehow the spirit of the place carried me along with it. I couldn't help wishing to be thought of and treated as an equal by the men. It's a very bitter thing for a proud, shy, sensitive fellow, as I am by nature, to have to bear the sort of assumption and insolence one meets with. I furnished my rooms well, and dressed well. Ah! you stare; but this is not the furniture I started with; I sold it all when I came to my senses, and put in this tumble-down second-hand stuff, and I have worn out my fine clothes. I know I'm not well dressed now. (Tom nodded ready acquiescence to this position.) Yes, though I still wince a little now and then – a great deal oftener than I like – I don't carry any false colors. I can't quite conquer the feeling of shame (for shame it is, I am afraid), but at any rate I don't try to hide my poverty any longer, I haven't for these eighteen months. I have a grim sort of pleasure in pushing it in everybody's face. (Tom assented with a smile, remembering how excessively uncomfortable Hardy had made him by this little peculiarity the first time he was in his rooms.) The first thing which opened my eyes a little was the conduct of the tradesmen. My bills all came in within a week of the delivery of the furniture and clothes; some of them wouldn't leave the things without payment. I was very angry and vexed, not at the bills, for I had my savings, which were more than enough to pay for everything. But I knew that these same tradesmen never thought of asking for payment under

a year, oftener two, from other men. Well, it was a lesson. Credit for gentlemen-commoners, ready-money dealings with servitors! I owe the Oxford tradesmen much for that lesson. If they would only treat every man who comes up as a servitor, it would save a deal of misery.

"My cure was completed by much higher folk, though. I can't go through the whole treatment, but will give you a specimen or two of the doses, giving precedence (as is the way here) to those administered by the highest in rank. I got them from all sorts of people, but none did me more good than the lords' pills. Amongst other ways of getting on I took to sparring, which was then very much in vogue. I am a good hand at it, and very fond of it, so that it wasn't altogether flunkeyism, I'm glad to think. In my second term two or three fighting men came down from London, and gave a benefit at the Weirs. I was there, and set to with one of them. We were well matched, and both of us did our very best; and when we had had our turn we drew down the house, as they say. Several young tufts and others of the faster men came up to me afterwards and complimented me. They did the same by the professional, but it didn't occur to me at the time that they put us both in the same category.

"I am free to own that I was really pleased two days afterwards, when a most elaborate flunkey brought a card to my door inscribed 'The Viscount Philippine, Ch. Ch., at home to-night, eight o'clock – sparring.' Luckily, I made a light dinner, and went sharp to time into Christ Church. The porter directed me to the

noble Viscount's rooms; they were most splendid, certainly – first floor rooms in Peckwater. I was shown into the large room, which was magnificently furnished and lighted. A good space was cleared in the centre; there were all sorts of bottles and glasses on the sideboard. There might have been twelve or thirteen men present, almost all in tufts or gentlemen commoners' caps. One or two of our college I recognized. The fighting man was also there, stripped for sparring, which none of the rest were. It was plain that the sport had not begun; I think he was doing some trick of strength as I came in. My noble host came forward with a nod and asked me if I would take anything, and when I declined, said, 'Then will you put on the gloves?' I looked at him rather surprised, and thought it an odd way to treat the only stranger in his rooms. However, I stripped, put on the gloves, and one of the others came forward to tie them for me. While he was doing it I heard my host say to the man, 'A five-pound note, mind, if you do it within the quarter-of-an-hour.' 'Only half-minute time, then, my lord,' he answered. The man who was tying my gloves said, 'Be steady; don't give him a chance to knock you down.' It flashed across me in a moment now why I was there; but it was too late to draw back; so we stood up and began sparring. I played very steadily and light at first to see whether my suspicions were well founded, and in two minutes I was satisfied. My opponent tried every dodge to bring on a rally, and when he was foiled I could see that he was shifting his glove. I stopped and insisted that his gloves should be tied, and then we went on again.

"I kept on the defensive. The man was in bad training, and luckily I had the advantage by an inch or so in length of arm. Before five minutes was over, I had caught enough of the bystander's remarks to know that my noble host had betted a pony that I should be knocked down in a quarter-of-an-hour. My one object now was to make him lose his money. My opponent did his utmost for his patron, and fairly winded himself in his efforts to get at me. He had to call time twice himself. I said not a word; my time would come I knew, if I could keep on my legs, and of this I had little fear. I held myself together, made no attack, and my length of arm gave me the advantage in every counter. It was all I could do, though, to keep clear of his rushes as the time drew on. On he came time after time, careless of guarding, and he was full as good a man as I. 'Time's up; it's past the quarter.' 'No, by Jove half a minute yet; now's your time, said my noble host to his man, who answered by a rush. I met him as before with a steady counter, but this time my blow got home under his chin, and he staggered, lost his footing, and went fairly over on his back.

"Most of the bystanders seemed delighted, and some of them hurried towards me. But I tore off the gloves, flung them on the ground, and turned to my host. I could hardly speak, but I made an effort, and said quietly, 'You have brought a stranger to your rooms, and have tried to make him fight for your amusement; now I tell you it is a blackguard act of yours – an act which no gentleman would have done.' My noble host made no remark.

I threw on my waist-coat, and then turned to the rest and said '*Gentlemen* would not have stood by and seen it done.' I went up to the side-board, uncorked a bottle of champagne, and half filled a tumbler, before a word was spoken. Then one of the visitors stepped forward and said, 'Mr. Hardy, I hope you won't go, there has been a mistake; we did not know of this. I am sure many of us are very sorry for what has occurred; stay and look on, we will all of us spar.' I looked at him, and then at my host, to see whether the latter joined in the apology. Not he, he was doing the dignified sulky, and most of the rest seemed to me to be with him. 'Will any of you spar with me?' I said, tauntingly, tossing off the champagne. 'Certainly, the new speaker said directly, 'If you wish it, and are not too tired, I will spar with you myself; you will, won't you, James?' and he turned to one of the other men. If any of them had backed him by a word I should probably have stayed; several of them, I learnt afterwards, would have liked to have done so, but it was an awkward scene to interfere in. I stopped a moment and then said, with a sneer, 'You're too small, and none of the other gentlemen seem inclined to offer.'

"I saw that I had hurt him, and felt pleased at the moment I had done so. I was now ready to start, and I could not think of anything more unpleasant to say at the moment; so I went up to my antagonist, who was standing with the gloves on still, not quite knowing what to be at, and held out my hand. 'I can shake hands with you at any rate,' I said; 'you only did what you were paid for in the regular way of business, and you did your

best.' He looked rather sheepish, but held out his gloved hand, which I shook. 'Now, I have the honor to wish you all a very good evening;' and so I left the place and got home to my own rooms, and sat down there with several new ideas in my head. On the whole, the lesson was not a very bitter one, for I felt that I had had the best of the game. The only thing I really was sorry for was my own insolence to the man who had come forward as a peacemaker. I had remarked his face before. I don't know how it is with you, but I can never help looking at a tuft – the gold tassel draws one's eye somehow; and then it's an awful position, after all, for mere boys to be placed in. So I knew his face before that day, though I had only seen him two or three times in the street. Now it was much more clearly impressed on my mind; and I called it up and looked it over, half hoping that I should detect something to justify me to myself, but without success. However, I got the whole affair pretty well out of my head by bedtime.

"While I was at breakfast the next morning, my scout came in with a face of the most ludicrous importance, and quite a deferential manner. I declare I don't think he has ever got back since that day to his original free-and-easy swagger. He laid a card on my table, paused a moment, and then said, 'His ludship is houtside watin', sir.'

"I had had enough of lords' cards; and the scene of yesterday rose painfully before me as I threw the card into the fire without looking at it, and said, 'Tell him I am engaged.'

"My scout, with something like a shudder at my audacity,

replied, 'His ludship told me to say, sir, as his bis'ness was very particular, so hif you was engaged he would call again in 'arf an hour.'

"'Tell him to come in, then, if he won't take a civil hint.' I felt sure who it would be, but hardly knew whether to be pleased or annoyed, when in another minute the door opened, and in walked the peacemaker. I don't know which of us was the most embarrassed; he walked straight up to me without lifting his eyes, and held out his hand saying, 'I hope, Mr. Hardy, you will shake hands with me now.'

"'Certainly, my lord,' I said, taking his hand; 'I am sorry for what I said to you yesterday, when my blood was up.'

"'You said no more than we deserved,' he answered twirling his cap by the long gold tassel; 'I could not be comfortable without coming to assure you again myself, that neither I, nor, I believe, half the men in Philippine's rooms yesterday, knew anything of the bet. I really cannot tell you how annoyed I have been about it.'

"I assured him that he might make himself quite easy, and then remained standing, expecting him to go, and not knowing exactly what to say further. But he begged me to go on with my breakfast, and sat down, and then asked me to give him a cup of tea, as he had not breakfasted. So in a few minutes we were sitting opposite one another over tea and bread and butter, for he didn't ask for, and I didn't offer, anything else. It was rather a trying meal, for each of us was doing all he could to make out

the other. I only hope I was as pleasant as he was. After breakfast he went and I thought the acquaintance was probably at an end; he had done all that a gentleman need have done, and had well-nigh healed a raw place in my mental skin.

"But I was mistaken. Without intruding himself on me, he managed somehow or another to keep on building up the acquaintance little by little. For some time I looked out very jealously for any patronizing airs, and even after I was convinced, that he had nothing of the sort in him, avoided him as much as I could, though he was the most pleasant and best-informed man I knew. However, we became intimate, and I saw a good deal of him in a quiet way, at his own rooms. I wouldn't go to his parties, and asked him not to come to me here, for my horror of being thought a tuft-hunter had become almost a disease. He was not so old as I, but he was just leaving the University, for he had come up early, and lord's sons are allowed to go out in two years; – I suppose because the authorities think they will do less harm here in two than three years; but it is sometimes hard on poor men, who have to earn their bread, to see such a privilege given to those who want it least. When he left, he made me promise to go and pay him a visit – which I did in the long vacation, at a splendid place up in the North, and enjoyed myself more than I care to own. His father, who is quite worthy of his son, and all his family, were as kind as people could be.

"Well, amongst other folks I met there a young sprig of nobility who was coming up here the next term. He had been

brought up abroad, and, I suppose, knew very few men of his own age in England. He was not a bad style of boy, but rather too demonstrative, and not strong-headed. He took to me wonderfully, was delighted to hear that I was up at Oxford, and talked constantly of how much we should see of one another. As it happened, I was almost the first man he met when he got off the coach at the 'Angel,' at the beginning of his first term. He almost embraced me, and nothing would serve but I must dine with him at the inn, and we spent the evening together, and parted dear friends. Two days afterwards we met in the street; he was with two other youngsters, and gave me a polished and distant bow; in another week he passed me as if we had never met.

"I don't blame him, poor boy. My only wonder is, that any of them ever get through this place without being thoroughly spoilt. From Vice-Chancellor down to scout's boy, the whole of Oxford seems to be in league to turn their boys heads, even if they come up with them set on straight, which toadying servants at home take care shall never happen if they can hinder it. The only men who would do them good up here, both dons and undergraduates, keep out of their way, very naturally. Gentlemen-commoners have a little better chance, though not much, and seem to me to be worse than the tufts, and to furnish most of their toadies.

"Well, you are tired of my railing? I daresay I am rabid about it all. Only it does go to my heart to think what this place might be, and what it is. I see I needn't give you any more of my experience.

"You'll understand now some of the things that have puzzled

you about me. Oh! I know they did; you needn't look apologetic. I don't wonder, or blame you. I am a very queer bird for the perch I have lit on; I know that as well as anybody. The only wonder is that you ever took the trouble to try to lime me. Now have another glass of toddy. Why! it is near twelve. I must have one pipe and turn in. No Aristophanes to-night."

CHAPTER IX
"A BROWN BAIT."

Tom's little exaltation in his own eyes consequent on the cupboard-smashing escapade of his friend was not to last long. Not a week had elapsed before he himself arrived suddenly in Hardy's room in as furious a state of mind as the other had so lately been in, allowing for the difference of the men. Hardy looked up from his books and exclaimed: —

"What's the matter? Where have you been to-night? You look fierce enough to sit for a portrait of Sanguinoso Volcanoni, the bandit."

"Been!" said Tom, sitting down on the spare Windsor chair, which he usually occupied, so hard as to make it crack again; "been! I've been to a wine party at Hendon's. Do you know any of that set?"

"No, except Grey, who came into residence in the same term with me; we have been reading for degree together. You must have seen him here sometimes in the evenings."

"Yes, I remember; the fellow with a stiff neck, who won't look you in the face."

"Ay, but he is a sterling man at the bottom, I can tell you."

"Well, he wasn't there. You don't know any of the rest?"

"No."

"And never went to any of their parties?"

"No."

"You've had no loss, I can tell you," said Tom, pleased that the ground was clear for him. "I never was amongst such a set of waspish, dogmatical, over-bearing fellows in my life."

"Why, what in the name of fortune have they been doing to you?

How did you fall among such Philistines?"

"I'm such an easy fool, you see," said Tom, "I go off directly with any fellow that asks me; fast or slow, it's all the same. I never think twice about the matter, and generally, I like all the fellows I meet, and enjoy everything. But just catch me at another of their stuck-up wines, that's all."

"But you won't tell me what's the matter."

"Well, I don't know why Hendon should have asked me. He can't think me a likely card for a convert, I should think. At any rate, he asked me to wine, and I went as usual. Everything was in capital style (it don't seem to be any part of their creed, mind you, to drink bad wine), and awfully gentlemanly and decorous."

"Yes, that's aggravating, I admit. It would have been in better taste, of course, if they had been a little blackguard and indecorous. No doubt, too, one has a right to expect bad wine at Oxford. Well?"

Hardy spoke so gravely, that Tom had to look across at him for half a minute to see whether he was in earnest. Then he went on with a grin.

"There was a piano in one corner, and muslin curtains – I give you my word, muslin curtains, besides the stuff ones."

"You don't say so," said Hardy; "put up, no doubt, to insult you. No wonder you looked, so furious when you came in. Anything else?"

"Let me see – yes – I counted three sorts of scents on the mantel-piece, besides Eau-de-Cologne. But I could have stood it well enough if it hadn't been for their talk. From one thing to another they got to cathedrals, and one of them called St. Paul's 'a disgrace to a Christian city;' I couldn't stand that, you know. I was always bred to respect St. Paul's; weren't you?"

"My education in that line was neglected," said Hardy, gravely.

"And so you took up the cudgels for St. Paul's?"

"Yes, I plumped out that St. Paul's was the finest cathedral in England. You'd have thought I had said that lying was one of the cardinal virtues – one or two just treated me to a sort of pitying sneer, but my neighbors were down upon me with a vengeance. I stuck to my text though, and they drove me into saying I liked the Ratcliffe more than any building in Oxford; which I don't believe I do, now I come to think of it. So when they couldn't get me to budge for their talk, they took to telling me that every body that knew anything about church architecture was against me – of course meaning that I knew nothing about it – for the matter of that, I don't mean to say that I do" – Tom paused; it had suddenly occurred to him that there might be some reason

in the rough handling he had got.

"But what did you say to the authorities?" said Hardy, who was greatly amused.

"Said I didn't care a straw for them" said Tom, "there was no right or wrong in the matter, and I had as good a right to my opinion as Pugin – or whatever his name is – and the rest."

"What heresy!" said Hardy, laughing; "you caught it for that, I suppose?"

"Didn't I! They made such a noise over it, that the men at the other end of the table stopped talking (they were all freshmen at our end), and when they found what was up, one of the older ones took me in hand, and I got a lecture about the middle ages, and the monks. I said I thought England was well rid of the monks; and then we got on to Protestantism, and fasting, and apostolic succession, and passive obedience, and I don't know what all! I only know I was tired enough of it before the coffee came; but I couldn't go, you know, with all of them on me at once, could I?"

"Of course not; you were like the 6,000 unconquerable British infantry at Albuera. You held your position by sheer fighting, suffering fearful loss."

"Well," said Tom, laughing, for he had talked himself into good humor again. "I dare say I talked a deal of nonsense; and, when I come to think it over, a good deal of what some of them said had something in it. I should like to hear it again quietly; but there were others sneering and giving themselves airs, but that puts a fellow's back up."

"Yes," said Hardy, "a good many of the weakest and vainest men who come up take to this sort of thing now. They can do nothing themselves, and get a sort of platform by going in on the High Church business from which to look down on their neighbors."

"That's just what I thought," said Tom, "they tried to push mother Church, mother Church, down my throat at every turn; I'm as fond of the Church as any of them, but I don't want to be jumping up on her back every minute, like a sickly chicken getting on the old hen's back to warm its feet whenever the ground is cold, and fancying himself taller than all the rest of the brood."

"You were unlucky," said Hardy; "there are some very fine fellows amongst them."

"Well, I haven't seen much of them," said Tom, "and I don't want to see any more, for it seems to be all Gothic mouldings and man-millinery business."

"You won't think so when you've been up a little longer." said Hardy, getting up to make tea, which operation he had hardly commenced, when a knock came at the door, and in answer to Hardy's "Come in," a slight, shy man appeared, who hesitated, and seemed inclined to go when he saw that Hardy was not alone.

"Oh, come in, and have a cup of tea, Grey. You know Brown, I think?" said Hardy, looking round from the fire, where he was filling his teapot, to watch Tom's reception of the new comer.

Our hero took his feet down, drew himself up and made a

solemn bow, which Grey returned, and then slid nervously into a chair and looked very uncomfortable. However, in another minute Hardy came to the rescue and began pouring out the tea. He was evidently tickled at the idea of confronting Tom so soon with another of his enemies. Tom saw this, and put on a cool and majestic manner in consequence, which evidently increased the discomfort of Grey's seat, and kept Hardy on the edge of an abyss of laughter. In fact, he had to ease himself by talking of indifferent matters and laughing at nothing. Tom had never seen him in this sort of humor before, and couldn't help enjoying it, though he felt that it was partly at his own expense. But when Hardy once just approached the subject of the wine party, Tom bristled up so quickly, and Grey looked so meekly wretched, though he knew nothing of what was coming, that Hardy suddenly changed the subject, and turning to Grey, said—

"What have you been doing the last fortnight? You haven't been here once. I've been obliged to get on with my Aristotle without you."

"I'm very sorry indeed, but I haven't been able to come," said Grey, looking sideways at Hardy, and then at Tom, who sat regarding the wall, supremely indifferent.

"Well, I've finished my Ethics," said Hardy; "can't you come in to-morrow night to talk them over? I suppose you're through them too?"

"No, really," said Grey. "I haven't been able to look at them since the last time I was here."

"You must take care," said Hardy. "The new examiners are all for science and history; it won't do for you to go in trusting to your scholarship."

"I hope to make it up in the Easter vacation," said Grey. "You'll have enough to do then," said Hardy; "but how is it you've dropped astern so?"

"Why, the fact is," said Grey, hesitatingly, "that the curate of St. Peter's has set up some night schools, and wanted some help. So I have been doing what I could to help him; and really," looking at his watch, "I must be going. I only wanted to tell you how it was I didn't come now."

Hardy looked at Tom, who was rather taken aback by this announcement, and began to look less haughtily at the wall. He even condescended to take a short glance at his neighbor.

"It's unlucky," said Hardy; "but do you teach every night?"

"Yes," said Grey. "I used to do my science and history at night, you know; but I find that teaching takes so much out of me, that I'm only fit for bed now, when I get back. I'm so glad I've told you. I have wanted to do it for some time. And if you would let me come in for an hour, directly after hall, instead of later, I think I could still manage that."

"Of course," said Hardy, "come when you like. But it's rather hard to take you away every night, so near the examinations."

"It is my own wish," said Grey. "I should have been very glad if it hadn't happened just now; but as it has I must do the best I can."

"Well, but I should like to help you. Can't I take a night or two off your hands?"

"No!" said Tom, fired with sudden enthusiasm; "it will be as bad for you, Hardy. It can't want much scholarship to teach there. Let me go. I'll take two nights a week if you'll let me."

"Oh, thank you," said Grey; "but I don't know how my friend might like it. That is – I mean," he said, getting very red, "it's very kind of you, only I'm used to it; and – and they rely on me. But I really must go – good night;" and Grey went off in confusion.

As soon as the door had fairly closed, Hardy could stand it no longer, and lay back in his chair laughing till the tears ran down his cheeks. Tom, wholly unable to appreciate the joke, sat looking at him with perfect gravity.

"What can there be in your look, Brown?" said Hardy, when he could speak again, "to frighten Grey so? Did you see what a fright he was in at once, at the idea of turning you into the night schools? There must be some lurking Protestantism in your face somewhere, which I hadn't detected."

"I don't believe he was frightened at me a bit. He wouldn't have you either, remember," said Tom.

"Well, at any rate, that doesn't look as if it were all mere Gothic-mouldings and man-millinery, does it?" said Hardy.

Tom sipped his tea, and considered.

"One can't help admiring him, do you know, for it," he said. "Do you think he is really thrown back, now, in his own reading by this teaching?"

"I'm sure of it. He is such a quiet fellow, that nothing else is likely to draw him off reading; I can see that he doesn't get on as he used, day by day. Unless he makes it up somehow, he won't get his first."

"He don't seem to like the teaching work much," said Tom.

"Not at all, so far as I can see."

"Then it is a very fine thing of him," said Tom.

"And you retract your man-millinery dictum, so far as he is concerned?"

"Yes, that I do, heartily; but not as to the set in general."

"Well, they don't suit me either; but, on the whole, they are wanted – at any rate, in this college. Even the worst of them is making some sort of protest for self-denial, and against self-indulgence, which is nowhere more needed than here."

"A nice sort of protest – muslin curtains, a piano, and old claret."

"Oh, you've no right to count Henden among them; he has only a little hankering after mediaevalism, and thinks the whole thing gentlemanly."

"I only know the whole clamjamfery of them were there, and didn't seem to protest much."

"Brown, you're a bigot. I should never have thought you would have been so furious against any set of fellows, I begin to smell Arnold."

"No you don't. He never spoke to me against anybody."

"Hallo! It was the Rugby atmosphere, then, I suppose. But I

tell you they are the only men in the college who are making that protest, whatever their motives may be."

"What do you say to yourself, old fellow?"

"Nonsense! I never deny myself any pleasure that I can afford, if it isn't wrong in itself, and doesn't hinder anyone else. I can tell you I am as fond of fine things and good living as you."

"If a thing isn't wrong, and you can afford it, and it doesn't hurt anybody! Just so; well, then, mustn't it be right for you to have? You wouldn't have it put under your nose, I suppose, just for you to smell at, and let it alone?"

"Yes, I know all that. I've been over it often enough, and there's truth in it. But, mind you, it's rather slippery ground, especially for a freshman; and there's a good deal to be said on the other side – I mean, for denying oneself just for the sake of the self denial."

"Well, they don't deny themselves the pleasure of looking at a fellow as if he were a Turk, because he likes St. Paul's better than Westminster Abbey."

"How that snubbing you got at the Ecclesiological wine party seems to wrankle. – There now! don't bristle up like a hedgehog. I'll never mention that unfortunate wine again. I saw the eight come in to-day. You were keeping much better time, but there is a weak place or two forward."

"Yes," said Tom, delighted to change the subject, "I find it awfully hard to pull up to Jervis's stroke. Do you think I shall ever get to it?"

"Of course you will. Why you have only been pulling behind

him a dozen times or so, and his is the most trying stroke on the river. You quicken a little on it; but I didn't mean you. Two and five are the blots in the boat."

"You think so?" said Tom, much relieved. "So does Miller, I can see. It's so provoking – Drysdale is to pull two in the races next term, and Blake seven, and then Diogenes will go to five. He's obliged to pull seven now, because Blake won't come down this term; no more will Drysdale. They say there will be plenty of time after Easter."

"It's a great pity," said Hardy.

"Isn't it," said Tom; "and it makes Miller so savage. He walks into us all as if it were our faults. Do you think he's a good coxswain?"

"First rate on most points, but rather too sharp tongued. You can't get a man's best out of him without a little praise."

"Yes, that's just it, he puts one's back up," said Tom. "But the Captain is a splendid fellow, isn't he?"

"Yes, but a little too easy, at least with men like Blake and Drysdale. He ought to make them train, or turn them out."

"But who could he get? There's nobody else. If you would pull, now – why shouldn't you? I'm sure it would make us all right."

"I don't subscribe to the club." said Hardy; "I wish I had, for I should have liked to have pulled with you, and behind Jervis this year."

"Do let me tell the Captain," said Tom, "I'm sure he'd manage it somehow."

"I'm afraid it's too late," said Hardy; "I cut myself off from everything of the sort two years ago, and I'm beginning to think I was a fool for my pains."

Nothing more was said on the subject at the time, but Tom went away in great spirits at having drawn this confession out of Hardy – the more so, perhaps, because he flattered himself that he had something to say to the change in his friend.

CHAPTER X
SUMMER TERM

How many spots in life are there which will bear comparison with the beginning of our second term at the University? So far as external circumstances are concerned, it seems hard to know what a man could find to ask for at that period of his life, if a fairy godmother were to alight in his rooms and offer him the usual three wishes. The sailor who had asked for "all the grog in the world," and "all the baccy in the world," was indeed driven to "a little more baccy" as his third requisition; but, at any rate his two first requisitions were to some extent grounded on what he held to be substantial wants; he felt himself actually limited in the matters of grog and tobacco. The condition which Jack would have been in as a wisher, if he had been started on his quest with the assurance that his utmost desires in the direction of alcohol and narcotic were already provided for, and must be left out of the question, is the only one affording a pretty exact parallel to the case we are considering. In our second term we are no longer freshmen, and begin to feel ourselves at home, while both "smalls" and "greats" are sufficiently distant to be altogether ignored if we are that way inclined, or to be looked forward to with confidence that the game is in our own hands if we are reading men. Our financial position – unless we have exercised

rare ingenuity in involving ourselves – is all that heart can desire; we have ample allowances paid in quarterly to the University bankers without thought or trouble of ours, and our credit is at its zenith. It is a part of our recognized duty to repay the hospitality we have received as freshmen; and all men will be sure to come to our first parties to see how we do the thing; it will be our own faults if we do not keep them in future. We have not had time to injure our characters to any material extent with the authorities of our own college, or of the University. Our spirits are never likely to be higher, or our digestions better. These and many other comforts and advantages environ the fortunate youth returning to Oxford after his first vacation; thrice fortunate, however, if, as happened in our hero's case, it is Easter term to which he is returning; for that Easter term, with the four days' vacation, and the little Trinity term at the end of it, is surely the cream of the Oxford year. Then, even in this our stern northern climate, the sun is beginning to have power, the days have lengthened out, great-coats are unnecessary at morning chapel, and the miseries of numbed hands and shivering skins no longer accompany every pull on the river and canter on Bullingdon. In Christ Church meadows and the college gardens the birds are making sweet music in the tall elms. You may almost hear the thick grass growing, and the buds on tree and shrub are changing from brown, red, or purple, to emerald green under your eyes; the glorious old city is putting on her best looks, and bursting into laughter and song. In a few weeks the races begin, and Cowley

marsh will be alive with white tents and joyous cricketers. A quick ear, on the towing-path by the Gut, may feast at one time on those three sweet sounds, the thud thud of the eight-oar, the crack of the rifles at the Weirs, and the click of the bat on the Magdalen ground. And then Commemoration rises in the background, with its clouds of fair visitors, and visions of excursions to Woodstock and Nuneham in the summer days – of windows open on to the old quadrangles in the long still evenings, through which silver laughter and strains of sweet music, not made by man, steal out and puzzle the old celibate jackdaws, peering down from the battlements, with heads on one side. To crown all, long vacation, beginning with the run to Henley regatta, or up to town to see the match with Cambridge at Lord's and taste some of the sweets of the season, before starting on some pleasure tour or reading party, or dropping back into the quiet pleasures of English country life! Surely, the lot of young Englishmen who frequent our universities is cast in pleasant places. The country has a right to expect something from those for whom she finds such a life as this in the years when enjoyment is keenest.

Tom was certainly alive to the advantages of the situation, and entered on his kingdom without any kind of scruple. He was very glad to find things so pleasant, and quite resolved to make the best he could of them. Then he was in a particularly good humour with himself, for in deference to the advice of Hardy, he had actually fixed on the books which he should send in for his little-go examination before going down for the Easter vacation, and

had read them through at home, devoting an hour or two almost daily to this laudable occupation. So he felt himself entitled to take things easily on his return. He had brought back with him two large hampers of good sound wine, a gift from his father, who had a horror of letting his son set before his friends the fire-water which is generally sold to the undergraduate. Tom found that his father's notions of the rate of consumption prevalent in the university were wild in the extreme. "In his time," the squire said, "eleven men came to his first wine party, and he had opened nineteen bottles of port for them. He was very glad to hear that the habits of the place had changed so much for the better; and as Tom wouldn't want nearly so much wine, he should have it out of an older bin." Accordingly, the port which Tom employed the first hour after his return in stacking carefully away in his cellar, had been more than twelve years in bottle, and he thought with unmixed satisfaction of the pleasing effect it would have on Jervis and Miller, and the one or two other men who knew good wine from bad, and guided public opinion on the subject, and of the social importance which he would soon attain from the reputation of giving good wine.

The idea of entertaining, of being hospitable, is a pleasant and fascinating one to most young men; but the act soon gets to be a bore to all but a few curiously constituted individuals. With these hospitality becomes first a passion and then a faith – a faith the practice of which, in the cases of some of its professors, reminds one strongly of the hints on such subjects scattered about the New

Testament. Most of us feel, when our friends leave us a certain sort of satisfaction, not unlike that of paying a bill; they have been done for, and can't expect anything more for a long time. Such thoughts never occur to your really hospitable man. Long years of narrow means cannot hinder him from keeping open house for whoever wants to come to him, and setting the best of everything before all comers. He has no notion of giving you anything but the best he can command if it be only fresh porter from the nearest mews. He asks himself not, "Ought I to invite A or B? do I owe him anything?" but, "Would A or B like to come here?" Give me these men's houses for real enjoyment, though you never get anything very choice there, – (how can a man produce old wine who gives his oldest every day?) – seldom much elbow room or orderly arrangement. The high arts of gastronomy and scientific drinking so much valued in our highly civilized community, are wholly unheeded by him, are altogether above him, are cultivated in fact by quite another set who have very little of the genuine spirit of hospitality in them, from those tables, should one by chance happen upon them, one senses, certainly with a feeling of satisfaction and expansion, chiefly physical, but entirely without the expansion of heart which one gets at the scramble of the hospitable man. So that we are driven to remark, even in such everyday matters as these, but it is the invisible, the spiritual, which after all gives value and reality even to dinners; and, with Solomon, to prefer the most touching *diner Russe*, the dinner of herbs where love is, though I trust that neither we nor

Solomon should object to well-dressed cutlets with our salad, if they happened to be going.

Readers will scarcely need to be told that one of the first things Tom did, after depositing his luggage and unpacking his wine, was to call at Hardy's rooms, where he found his friend deep as usual in his books, the hard-worked atlases and dictionaries of all sorts taking up more space than ever. After the first hearty greeting, Tom occupied his old place with much satisfaction.

"How long have you been up, old fellow?" he began; "you look quite settled."

"I only went home for a week. Well, what have you been doing in the vacation?"

"Oh, there was nothing much going on; so, amongst other things, I've nearly floored my little-go work."

"Bravo! you'll find the comfort of it now. I hardly thought you would take to the grind so easily."

"It's pleasant enough for a spurt," said Tom; "but I shall never manage a horrid perpetual grind like yours. But what in the world have you been doing to your walls?"

Tom might well ask, for the corners of Hardy's room were covered with sheets of paper of different sizes, pasted against the wall in groups. In the line of sight, from about the height of four to six feet, there was scarcely an inch of the original paper visible, and round each centre group there were outlying patches and streamers, stretching towards floor or ceiling, or away nearly to the bookcases or fireplace.

"Well, don't you think it is a great improvement on the old paper?" said Hardy. "I shall be out of rooms next term, and it will be a hint to the College that the rooms want papering. You're no judge of such matters, or I should ask you whether you don't see great artistic taste in the arrangement."

"Why, they're nothing but maps, and lists of names and dates," said Tom, who had got up to examine the decorations. "And what in the world are all these queer pins for?" he went on, pulling a strong pin with a large red sealing-wax head out of the map nearest to him.

"Hullo! take care there, what are you about?" shouted Hardy, getting up and hastening to the corner. "Why, you irreverent beggar, those pins are the famous statesmen and warriors of Greece and Rome."

"Oh, I beg your pardon; I didn't know I was in such august company;" saying which, Tom proceeded to stick the red-headed pin back in the wall.

"Now, just look at that," said Hardy, taking the pin out from the place where Tom had stuck it. "Pretty doings there would be amongst them with your management. This pin is Brasidas; you've taken him away from Naupactus, where he was watching the eleven Athenian galleys anchored under the temple of Apollo, and struck him down right in the middle of the Pnyx, where he will be instantly torn in pieces by a ruthless and reckless mob. You call yourself a Tory indeed! However, 'twas always the same with you Tories; calculating, cruel, and jealous. Use your leaders

up, and throw them over – that's the golden rule of aristocracies."

"Hang Brasidas," said Tom, laughing; "stick him back at Naupactus again. Here, which is Cleon? The scoundrel! give me hold of him, and I'll put him in a hot berth."

"That's he, with the yellow head. Let him alone, I tell you, or all will be hopeless confusion when Grey comes for his lecture. We're only in the third year of the war."

"I like your chaff about Tories sacrificing their great men," said Tom, putting his hands in his pockets to avoid temptation.

"How about your precious democracy, old fellow? Which is Socrates?"

"Here, the dear old boy! – this pin with the great grey head, in the middle of Athens, you see. I pride myself on my Athens. Here's the Piraeus and the long walls, and the hill of Mars. Isn't it as good as a picture?"

"Well, it is better than most maps, I think," said Tom; "but you're not going to slip out so easily. I want to know whether your pet democracy did or did not murder Socrates."

"I'm not bound to defend democracies. But look at my pins. It may be the natural fondness of a parent, but I declare they seem to me to have a great deal of character, considering the material. You'll guess them at once, I'm sure, if you mark the color and shape of the wax. This one now, for instance, who is he?"

"Alcibiades," answered Tom, doubtfully.

"Alcibiades!" shouted Hardy; "you fresh from Rugby, and not know your Thucydides better than that? There's Alcibiades, that

little purple-headed, foppish pin, by Socrates. This rusty-colored one is that respectable old stick-in-the-mud, Nicias."

"Well, but you've made Alcibiades nearly the smallest of the whole lot," said Tom.

"So he was, to my mind," said Hardy; "just the sort of insolent young ruffian whom I should have liked to buy at my price, and sell at his own. He must have been very like some of our gentlemen-commoners, with the addition of brains."

"I should really think, though," said Tom, "It must be a capital plan for making you remember the history."

"It is, I flatter myself. I've long had the idea, but I should never have worked it out and found the value of it but for Grey. I invented it to coach him in his history. You see we are in the Grecian corner. Over there is the Roman. You'll find Livy and Tacitus worked out there, just as Herodotus and Thucydides are here; and the pins are stuck for the Second Punic War, where we are just now. I shouldn't wonder if Grey got his first, after all, he's picking up so quick in my corners; and says he never forgets any set of events when he has picked them out with the pins."

"Is he working at that school still?" asked Tom.

"Yes, as hard as ever. He didn't go down for the vacation, and I really believe it was because the curate told him the school would go wrong if he went away."

"It's very plucky of him, but I do think he's a great fool not to knock it off now till he has passed, don't you?"

"No," said Hardy; "he is getting more good there than he can

ever get in the schools, though I hope he'll do well in them too."

"Well, I hope so; for he deserves it. And now, Hardy, to change the subject, I am going to give my first wine next Thursday; and here's the first card which has gone out for it. You'll promise me to come now, won't you?"

"What a hurry you're in." said Hardy, taking the card which he put on his mantel-piece, after examining it.

"But you'll promise to come, now?"

"I'm very hard at work; I can't be sure."

"You needn't stay above half an hour. I've brought back some famous wine from the governor's cellar; and I want so to get you and Jervis together. He is sure to come."

"Why, that's the bell for chapel beginning already," said Hardy; "I had no notion it was so late. I must be off, to put the new servitor up to his work. Will you come in after hall?"

"Yes if you will come to me next Thursday."

"We'll talk about it. But mind you come to-night; for you'll find me working Grey in the Punic wars, and you'll see how the pins act. I'm very proud of my show."

And so Hardy went off to chapel, and Tom to Drysdale's rooms, not at all satisfied that he had made Hardy safe. He found Drysdale lolling on his sofa, as usual, and fondling Jack. He had just arrived, and his servant and the scout were unpacking his portmanteaus. He seemed pleased to see Tom, but looked languid and used up.

"Where have you been this vacation?" said Tom; "you look

seedy."

"You may say that," said Drysdale. "Here, Henry, get out a bottle of Schiedam. Have a taste of bitters? there's nothing like it to set one's digestion right."

"No, thank'ee," said Tom, rejecting the glass which Henry proffered him; "my appetite don't want improving."

"You're lucky, then," said Drysdale. "Ah, that's the right stuff! I feel better already."

"But where have you been?"

"Oh, in the little village. It's no use being in the country at this time of year. I just went up to Limmer's, and there I stuck, with two or three more, till to-day."

"I can't stand London for more than a week," said Tom. "What did you do all the day?"

"We hadn't much to say to day-light" said Drysdale. "What with theatres, and sparing-cribs and the Coal-hole and Cider-cellars, and a little play in St. James's Street now and then, one wasn't up to early rising. However, I was better than the rest, for I had generally breakfasted by two o'clock."

"No wonder you look seedy. You'd much better have been in the country."

"I should have been more in pocket, at any rate," said Drysdale. "By Jove, how it runs away with the ready! I'm fairly cleaned out; and if I haven't luck at Van John, I'll be hanged if I know how I'm to get through term. But, look here, here's a bundle of the newest songs – first rate, some of them." And he threw

some papers across to Tom, who glanced at them without being at all edified.

"You're going to pull regularly, I hope, this term, Drysdale."

"Yes, I think so; it's cheap amusement, and I want a little training for a change."

"That's all right."

"I've brought down some dresses for our gipsy business, by the way. I didn't forget that. Is Blake back?"

"I don't know," said Tom; "but we shan't have time before the races."

"Well afterwards will do; though the days oughtn't to be too long. I'm all for a little darkness in masquerading."

"There's five o'clock striking. Are you going to dine in hall?"

"No; I shall go to the Mitre, and get a broil."

"Then I'm off. Let's see, – will you come and wine with me next Thursday?"

"Yes; only send us a card, 'to remind.'"

"All right!" said Tom, and went off to hall, feeling dissatisfied and uncomfortable about his fast friend, for whom he had a sincere regard.

After hall, Tom made a short round amongst his acquaintance, and then, giving himself up to the strongest attraction, returned to Hardy's rooms, comforting himself with the thought that it really must be an act of Christian charity to take such a terrible reader off his books for once in a way, when his conscience pricked him for intruding on Hardy during his hours of work. He found

Grey there, who was getting up his Roman history, under Hardy's guidance; and the two were working the pins on the maps and lists in the Roman corner when Tom arrived. He begged them not to stop, and very soon was as much interested in what they were doing as if he also were going into the schools in May; for Hardy had a way of throwing life into what he was talking about, and, like many men with strong opinions, and passionate natures, either carried his hearers off their legs and away with him altogether, or aroused every spark of combativeness in them. The latter was the effect which his lecture on the Punic Wars had on Tom. He made several protests as Hardy went on; but Grey's anxious looks kept him from going fairly into action, till Hardy stuck the black pin, which represented Scipio, triumphantly in the middle of Carthage, and, turning round said, "And now for some tea, Grey, before you have to turn out."

Tom opened fire while the tea was brewing.

"You couldn't say anything bad enough about aristocracies this morning, Hardy, and now to-night you are crowing over the success of the heaviest and cruelest oligarchy that ever lived, and praising them up to the skies."

"Hullo! here's a breeze!" said Hardy, smiling; "but I rejoice, O Brown, in that they thrashed the Carthaginians, and not, as you seem to think, in that they being aristocrats, thrashed the Carthaginians; for oligarchs they were not at this time."

"At any rate they answer to the Spartans in the struggle, and the Carthaginians to the Athenians; and yet all your sympathies

are with the Romans to-night in the Punic Wars, though they were with the Athenians before dinner."

"I deny your position. The Carthaginians were nothing but a great trading aristocracy – with a glorious family or two I grant you, like that of Hannibal; but, on the whole, a dirty, bargain-driving, buy-cheap-and-sell-dear aristocracy – of whom the world was well rid. They like the Athenians indeed! Why, just look what the two people have left behind them-"

"Yes," interrupted Tom; "but we only know the Carthaginians through the reports of their destroyers. Your heroes trampled them out with hoofs of iron."

"Do you think the Roman hoof could have trampled out their Homer if they ever had one?" said Hardy. "The Romans conquered Greece too, remember."

"But Greece was never so near beating them."

"True. But I hold to my point. Carthage was the mother of all huxters, compassing sea and land to sell her wares."

"And no bad line of life for a nation. At least Englishmen ought to think so."

"No they ought not; at least if *'Punica fides'* is to be the rule of trade. Selling any amount of Brummagem wares never did nation or man much good, and never will. Eh, Grey?"

Grey winced at being appealed to, but remarked that he hoped the Church would yet be able to save England from the fate of Tyre or Carthage, the great trading nations of the old world; and then, swallowing his tea, and looking as if he had been caught

robbing a henroost, he made a sudden exit, and hurried away out of college to the night school.

"What a pity he is so odd and shy," said Tom; "I should so like to know more of him."

"It *is* a pity. He is much better when he is alone with me. I think he has heard from some of the set that you are a furious Protestant, and sees an immense amount of stiff-neckedness in you."

"But about England and Carthage," said Tom, shirking the subject of his own peculiarities; "you don't really think us like them?

It gave me a turn to hear you translating 'Punica fides' into Brummagem wares just now.

"I think that successful trade is our rock ahead. The devil who holds new markets and twenty per cent profits in his gift is the devil that England has most to fear from. 'Because of unrighteous dealings, and riches gotten by deceit the kingdom is translated from one people to another,' said the wise man. Think of that opium war the other day. I don't believe we can get over many more such businesses as that. Grey falls back on the Church, you see, to save the nation; but the Church he dreams of will never do it. Is there any that can? There *must* be surely, or we have believed a lie. But this work of making trade righteous, of Christianizing trade, looks like the very hardest the Gospel has ever had to take in hand – in England at any rate."

Hardy spoke slowly and doubtfully, and paused as if asking

for Tom's opinion.

"I never heard it put in that way. I know very little of politics or the state of England. But come, now; the putting down the slave-trade and compensating our planters, *that* shows that we are not sold to the trade devil yet, surely."

"I don't think we are. No, thank God, there are plenty of signs that we are likely to make a good fight of it yet."

They talked together for another hour, drawing their chairs round to the fire, and looking dreamingly into the embers, as is the wont of men who are throwing out suggestions, and helping one another to think, rather than arguing. At the end of that time, Tom left Hardy to his books, and went away laden with several new ideas, one of the clearest of which was that he was awfully ignorant of the contemporary history of his own country, and that it was the thing of all others which he ought to be best informed on, and thinking most about. So, being of an impetuous turn of mind, he went straight to his rooms to commence his new study, where, after diligent hunting, the only food of the kind he required which turned up was the last number of *Bell's Life*from the pocket of his great coat. Upon this he fell to work, in default of anything better, and was soon deep in the P. R. column, which was full of interesting speculations as to the chances of Bungaree, in his forthcoming campaign against the British middleweights. By the time he had skimmed through the well-known sheets, he was satisfied that the columns of his old acquaintance were not the place, except in the police reports,

where much could be learnt about the present state or future prospects of England. Then, the first evening of term being a restless place, he wandered out again, and before long landed, as his custom was, at Drysdale's door.

On entering the room he found Drysdale and Blake alone together, the former looking more serious than Tom had ever seen him before. As for Blake, the restless, haggard expression sat more heavily than ever on his face, sadly marring its beauty. It was clear that they changed the subject of their talk abruptly on his entrance; so Tom looked anywhere except straight before him as he was greeting Blake. He really felt very sorry for him at the moment. However, in another five minutes, he was in fits of laughter over Blake's description of the conversation between himself and the coachman who had driven the Glo'ster day-mail by which he had come up; in which conversation, nevertheless, when Tom came to think it over, and try to repeat it afterwards, the most facetious parts seemed to be the "sez he's" and the "sez I's" with which Jehu larded his stories; so he gave up the attempt, wondering what he could have found in it to laugh at.

"By the way, Blake," said Drysdale, "how about our excursion into Berkshire masquerading this term? Are you game?"

"Not exactly," said Blake; "I really must make the most of such time as I have left, if I'm going into the schools this term."

"If there's one thing which spoils Oxford it is those schools," said Drysdale; "they get in the way of everything. I ought to be going up for smalls myself next term, and I haven't opened a book

yet, and don't mean to do so. Follow a good example, old fellow, you're cock-sure of your first, every-body knows."

"I wish everybody would back his opinion, and give me a shade of odds. Why, I have scarcely thought of my history."

"Why the d – l should they make such a fuss about history? One knows perfectly well that those old black-guard heathens were no better than they should be; and what good it can do to lumber one's head with who their grandmothers were, and what they ate, and when and where and why they had their stupid brains knocked out, I can't see for the life of me."

"Excellently well put. Where did you pick up such sound views, Drysdale? But you're not examiner yet; and, on the whole, I must rub up my history somehow. I wish I knew how to do it."

"Can't you put on a coach?" said Drysdale.

"I have one on, but history is my weak point, said Blake.

"I think I can help you," said Tom. "I've just been hearing a lecture in Roman history, and one that won't be so easy to forget as most;" and he went on to explain Hardy's plans, to which Blake listened eagerly.

"Capital!" he said, when Tom had finished. "In whose rooms did you say they are?"

"In Hardy's, and he works at them every night with Grey."

"That's the queer big servitor, his particular pal," put in Drysdale; "there's no accounting for tastes."

"You don't know him," retorted Tom; "and the less you say about him the better."

"I know he wears highlows and short flannels, and-"

"Would you mind asking Hardy to let me come to his lectures?" interrupted Blake, averting the strong language which was rising to Tom's lips. "I think they seem just the things I want. I shouldn't like to offer to pay him, unless you think-"

"I'm quite sure," interrupted Tom, "that he won't take anything. I will ask him to-morrow whether he will let you come, and he is such a kind good fellow that I'm almost sure he will."

"I should like to know your pal, too, Brown," said Drysdale; "you must introduce me, with Blake."

"No, I'll be hanged if I do," said Tom.

"Then I shall introduce myself," said Drysdale; "see if I don't sit next him, now, at your wine on Thursday."

Here Drysdale's scout entered with two notes, and wished to know if Mr. Drysdale would require anything more. Nothing but hot water; he could put the kettle on, Drysdale said, and go; and while the scout was fulfilling his orders, he got up carelessly, whistling, and walking to the fire, read the notes by the light of one of the candles which were burning on the mantle-piece. Blake was watching him eagerly, and Tom saw this, and made some awkward efforts to go on talking about the advantages of Hardy's plan for learning history. But he was talking to deaf ears, and soon came to a stand still. He saw Drysdale crumple up the notes in his hand and shove them into his pocket. After standing for a few seconds in the same position, with his back to them, he turned around with a careless air, and sauntered to the table

where they were sitting.

"Let's see, what were we saying?" he began. "Oh, about your eccentric pal, Brown."

"You've answers from both?" interrupted Blake. Drysdale nodded, and was beginning to speak again to Tom when Blake got up and said, with white lips, "I *must* see them."

"No, never mind, what does it matter?"

"Matter! by heaven, I must and will see them now."

Tom saw at once that he had better go, and so took up his cap, wished them good night, and went off to his own rooms.

He might have been sitting there for about twenty minutes, when Drysdale entered.

"I couldn't help coming over, Brown," he said, "I must talk to some one, and Blake has gone off raging. I don't know what he'll do – I never was so bothered or savage in my life."

"I am very sorry," said Tom; "he looked very bad in your rooms. Can I do anything?"

"No, but I must talk to some one. You know – no you don't, by the way – but, however, Blake got me out of a tremendous scrape in my first term, and there's nothing that I am not bound to do for him, and wouldn't do if I could. Yes, by George, whatever fellows say of me they shall never say I didn't stand by a man who stood by me. Well, he owes a dirty 300L. or 400L. or something of the sort – nothing worth talking of, I know – to people in Oxford, and they have been leading him a dog's life this year and more. Now, he's just going up for his degree, and two or three of

these creditors – the most rascally of course – are sueing him in the Vice-Chancellor's Court, thinking now's the time to put the screw on. He will be ruined if they are not stopped somehow. Just after I saw you to-day, he came to me about it. You never saw a fellow in such a state; I could see it was tearing him to pieces, telling it to me even. However, I soon set him at ease as far as I was concerned; but, as the devil will have it, I can't lend him the money, though 60L. would get him over the examination, and then he can make terms. My guardian advanced me 200L. beyond my allowance just before Easter, and I haven't 20L. left, and the bank here has given me notice not to overdraw any more. However, I thought to settle it easy enough; so I told him to meet me at the Mitre in half an hour for dinner, and when he was gone I sat down and wrote two notes – the first to St. Cloud. That fellow was with us off and on in town, and one night he and I went partners at *roulette*, I finding ready-money for the time, gains and losses to be equally shared in the end. I left the table to go and eat some supper, and he lost 80L., and paid it out of my money. I didn't much care, and he cursed the luck and acknowledged that he owed me 40L. at the time. Well, I just reminded him of this 40L. and said I should be glad of it (I know he has plenty of money just now), but added, that it might stand if he would join me and Blake in borrowing 60L.; I was fool enough to add that Blake was in difficulties, and I was most anxious to help him. As I thought that St. Cloud would probably pay the 40L. but do no more, I wrote also to Chanter – heaven knows why, except

that the beast rolls in money, and has fawned on me till I've been nearly sick this year past – and asked him to lend Blake 50L. on our joint note of hand. Poor Blake! when I told him what I had done at the Mitre, I think I might as well have stuck the carving knife into him. We had a wretched two hours; then you came in, and I got my two answers – here they are."

Tom took the proffered notes, and read:

"DEAR DRYSDALE, – Please explain the allusion in yours to some mysterious 40L. I remember perfectly the occurrence to which you refer in another part of your note. You were tired of sitting at the table, and went off to supper, leaving me (not by my own desire) to play for you with your money. I did so, and had abominable luck, as you will remember, for I handed you back a sadly dwindled heap on your return to the table. I hope you are in no row about that night? I shall be quite ready to give evidence of what passed if it will help you in any way. I am always yours very truly,

A. ST. CLOUD

"P. S. I must decline the little joint operation for Blake's benefit, which you propose."

The second answer ran:

"DEAR DRYSDALE, – I am sorry that I cannot accommodate Mr. Blake, as a friend of yours, but you see his acceptance is mere waste paper, and you cannot give security until you are of age, so if you were to die the money would be lost. Mr. Blake has always carried his head as high as if he had

5000l. a year to spend; perhaps now he will turn less haughty to men who could buy him up easy enough.

I remain yours sincerely,

JABEZ CHANTER."

Tom looked up and met Drysdale's eyes, which had more of purpose in them than he had ever seen before. "Fancy poor Blake reading those two notes," he said, "and 'twas I brought them on him. However, he shall have the money somehow to-morrow, if I pawn my watch. I'll be even with those two some day." The two remained in conference for some time longer; it is hardly worth while to do more than relate the result.

At three o'clock the next day, Blake, Drysdale and Tom were in the back parlor of a second-rate inn, in the Corn-market. On the table were pens and ink, some cases of Eau-de-Cologne and jewelry, and behind it a fat man of forbidding aspect who spent a day or two in each term at Oxford. He held in his thick red damp hand, ornamented as to the fore-finger with a huge ring, a piece of paper.

"Then I shall draw for a hundred-and-five?"

"If you do we won't sign," said Drysdale; "now, be quick, Ben" (the fat man's name was Benjamin), "you infernal shark, we've been wrangling long enough over it. Draw for 100L at three months, or we're off."

"Then, Mr. Drysdale, you gents will take part in goods. I wish to do all I can for gents as comes well introduced, but money is very scarce just now."

"Not a stuffed bird, bottle of Eau-de-Cologne, ring or cigar, will we have. So now, no more nonsense, put down 75L on the table."

The money-lender, after another equally useless attempt to move Drysdale, who was the only one of the party who spoke, produced a roll of bills, and counted out 75L, thinking to himself that he would make this young spark sing a different tune before very long. He then filled up the piece of paper, muttering that the interest was nothing considering the risk, and he hoped they would help him to some thing better with some of their friends. Drysdale reminded him, in terms not too carefully chosen, that he was getting cent per cent. The document was signed, – Drysdale took the notes, and they went out.

"Well, that's well over," said Drysdale, as they walked towards High Street. "I'm proud of my tactics, I must say; one never does so well for oneself as for anyone else. If I had been on my own hook, that fellow would have let me in for 20L worth of stuffed birds and bad jewelry. Let's see, what do you want, Blake?"

"Sixty will do," said Blake.

"You had better take 65L; there'll be some law costs to pay," and Drysdale handed him the notes.

"Now, Brown, shall we divide the balance, – a fiver a piece?"

"No, thank you," said Tom, "I don't want it; as you two are to hold me harmless, you must do what you like with the money." So Drysdale pocketed the 10L, after which they walked in silence to the gate of St. Ambrose. The most reckless youngster doesn't

begin this sort of thing without reflections which are apt to keep him silent. At the gates Blake wrung both their hands. "I don't say much, but I sha'n't forget it." He got out the words with some difficulty, and went off to his rooms.

CHAPTER XI
MUSCULAR CHRISTIANITY

Within the next week or two several important events had happened to one and another of our St. Ambrose friends. Tom had introduced Blake to Hardy, after some demur on the part of the latter. Blake was his senior by a term; might have called on him any time these three years; why should he want to make his acquaintance now? But when Tom explained to him that it would be a kind thing to let Blake come and coach up his history with him, for that unless he took a high degree in the coming examination, he would have to leave the college, and probably be ruined for life, Hardy at once consented.

Tom did not venture to inquire for a day or two how the two hit it off together. When he began cautiously to approach the subject, he was glad to find that Hardy liked Blake. "He is a gentleman, and very able," he said; "it is curious to see how quickly he is overhauling Grey, and yet how Grey takes to him. He has never looked scared at him (as he still does at you, by the way) since the first night they met. Blake has the talent of setting people at their ease without saying anything. I shouldn't wonder if Grey thinks he has sound Church notions. It's a dangerous talent, and may make a man very false if he doesn't take care." Tom asked if Blake would be up in his history in time. Hardy thought he

might perhaps, but he had a great lee-way to make up. If capacity for taking in cram would do it, he would be all right. He had been well crammed in his science, and had put him (Hardy) up to many dodges which might be useful in the schools, and which you couldn't get without a private tutor.

Then Tom's first wine had gone off most successfully. Jervis and Miller had come early and stayed late, and said all that was handsome of the port, so that he was already a social hero with the boating set. Drysdale, of course, had been there, rattling away to everybody in his reckless fashion, and setting a good example to the two or three fast men whom Tom knew well enough to ask, and who consequently behaved pretty well, and gave themselves no airs, though as they went away together they grumbled slightly that Brown didn't give claret. The rest of the men had shaken together well, and seemed to enjoy themselves. The only drawback to Tom had been that neither Hardy nor Grey had appeared. They excused themselves afterwards on the score of reading, but Tom felt aggrieved in Hardy's case; he knew that it was only an excuse.

Then the training had begun seriously, Miller had come up specially for the first fortnight, to get them well in hand, as he said. After they were once fairly started, he would have to go down till just before the races; but he thought he might rely on the Captain to keep them up to their work in the interval.

So Miller, the coxswain, took to drawing the bow up to the ear at once. At the very beginning of the term, five or six weeks

before the races, the St. Ambrose boat was to be seen every other day at Abingdon; and early dinners, limitation of liquids and tobacco, and abstinence from late supper parties, pastry, ice, and all manner of trash, likely in Miller's opinion to injure nerve or wind, were hanging over the crew, and already, in fact, to some extent enforced. The Captain shrugged his shoulders, submitted to it all himself and worked away with all imperturbable temper; merely hinting to Miller, in private, that he was going too fast, and that it would be impossible to keep it up. Diogenes highly approved; he would have become the willing slave of any tyranny which should insist that every adult male subject should pull twenty miles, and never imbibe more than a quart of liquid, in the twenty-four hours. Tom was inclined to like it, as it helped him to realize the proud fact that he was actually in the boat. The rest of the crew were in all stages of mutiny and were only kept from breaking out by their fondness for the Captain and the knowledge that Miller was going in a few days. As it was, Blake was the only one who openly rebelled. Once or twice he stayed away. Miller swore and grumbled, the Captain shook his head, and the crew in general rejoiced.

It is to one of these occasions to which we must now turn. If the usual casual voyager of novels had been standing on Sandford lock, at about four, on the afternoon of April – th, 184-, he might have beheld the St. Ambrose eight-oar coming with a steady swing up the last reach. If such voyager were in the least conversant with the glorious mystery of rowing, he would have

felt his heart warm at the magnificent sweep and life of the stroke, and would, on the whole, have been pleased with the performance of the crew generally, considered as a college crew in the early stages of training. They came "hard all" up to the pool below the lock, the coxswain standing in the stern with a tiller-rope in each hand, and then shipped oars; the lock-gates opened, and the boat entered, and in another minute or two was moored to the bank above the lock, and the crew strolled into the little inn which stands by the lock, and, after stopping in the bar to lay hands on several pewters full of porter, passed through the house into the quoit and skittle-grounds behind. These were already well filled with men of other crews, playing in groups or looking on at the players. One of these groups, as they passed, seized on the Captain, and Miller stopped with him; the rest of the St. Ambrose men, in no humor for skittles, quoits, or any relaxation except rest and grumbling, took possession of the first table and seats offered, and came to anchor.

Then followed a moment of intense enjoyment, of a sort only appreciable by those who have had a twelve miles' training pull with a coxswain as sharp as a needle, and in an awful temper.

"Ah," said Drysdale, taking the pewter down from his lips, with a sigh, and handing it to Tom who sat next him, "by Jove I feel better."

"It's almost worth while pulling 'hard all' from Abingdon to get such a thirst," said another of the crew.

"I'll tell you what, though," said Drysdale, "to-day's the last

day you'll catch me in this blessed boat."

Tom had just finished his draught, but did not reply; it was by no means the first time that Drysdale had announced this resolve. The rest were silent also.

"It's bad enough to have to pull your heart out, without getting abused all the way into the bargain. There Miller stands in the stern – and a devilish easy thing it is to stand there and walk into us – I can see him chuckle as he comes to you and me, Brown – 'Now, 2, well forward;' '3, don't jerk;' 'Now 2, throw your weight on the oar; come, now, you can get another pound on.' I hang on like grim Death, – then its 'Time, 2; now, 3-'"

"Well, it's a great compliment," broke in Tom, with a laugh; "he thinks he can make something of us."

"He'll make nothing of us first, I think," said Drysdale. "I've lost eight pounds in a fortnight. The Captain ought to put me in every place in the boat, in turn, to make it water-tight. I've larded the bottom boards under my seat so that not a drop of water will ever come through again."

"A very good thing for you, old fellow," said Diogenes; "you look ten times better than you did at the beginning of the term."

"I don't know what you call a good thing, you old fluter. I'm obliged to sit on my hip bones – I can't go to a lecture – all the tutors think I am poking fun at them, and put me on directly. I haven't been able to go to lecture these ten days."

"So fond of lecture as he is, too, poor fellow," put in Tom.

"But they've discommonsed me for staying away," said

Drysdale; "not that I care much for that, though."

"Well, Miller goes down to-morrow morning – I heard him say so," said another.

"Then we'll memorialize the Captain and get out of these Abingdon pulls. Life isn't worth having at this rate."

"No other boat has been below Sandford, yet."

And so they sat on and plotted, and soon most of the other crews started. And then they took their turn at skittles, and almost forgot their grievances, which must be explained to those who don't know the river at Oxford.

The river runs along the south of the city, getting into the university quarter after it passes under the bridge connecting Berks and Oxfordshire, over which is the road to Abingdon. Just below this bridge are the boat builders' establishments on both sides of the river, and then on the Oxfordshire side is Christchurch meadow, opposite which is moored the university barge. Here is the goal of all university races; and the racecourse stretches away down the river for a mile and a half, and a little below the starting place of the races is Iffley Lock. The next lock below Iffley is the Sandford Lock (where we left our boat's crew playing at skittles), which is about a mile and a half below Iffley. Below Sandford there is no lock till you get to Abingdon, a distance of six miles and more by the river. Now, inasmuch as the longest distance to be rowed in the races is only the upper mile and a half from Iffley to the university barge, of course all crews think themselves very hardly treated if they are taken

further than to Sandford. Pulling "hard all" from Sandford to Iffley, and then again from Iffley over the regular course, ought to be enough in all conscience. So chorus the crews; and most captains and coxswains give in. But here and there some enemy of his kind – some uncomfortable, worriting, energizing mortal, like Miller – gets command of a boat, and then the unfortunate crew are dragged, bemoaning their fate, down below Sandford, where no friendly lock intervenes to break the long, steady swing of the training pull every two miles, and the result for the time is blisters and mutiny. I am bound to add that it generally tells, and that the crew which has been undergoing that *peine forte et dure* is very apt to get the change out of it on the nights of hard races.

So the St. Ambrose crew played out their skittles, and settled to appeal the Captain in a body the next day, after Miller's departure; and then being summoned to the boat, they took to the water again, and paddled steadily up home, arriving just in time for hall for those who liked to hurry. Drysdale never liked hurrying himself; besides, he could not dine in hall, as he was discommonsed for persistent absence from lecture, and neglect to go to the Dean when sent for to explain his absence.

"I say, Brown, hang hall," he said to Tom, who was throwing on his things; "come and dine with me at the Mitre. I'll give you a bottle of hock; it's very good there."

"Hock's about the worst thing you drink in training," said Miller. "Isn't it, Jervis?"

"It's no good, certainly," said the Captain, as he put on his cap

and gown; "come along, Miller."

"There, you hear?" said Miller. "You can drink a glass of sound sherry, if you want wine;" and he followed the Captain.

Drysdale performed a defiant pantomime after the retiring coxswain, and then easily carried his point with Tom, except as to the hock. So they walked up to the Mitre together, where Drysdale ordered dinner and a bottle of hock in the coffee-room.

"Don't order hock, Drysdale; I shan't drink any."

"Then I shall have it all to my own cheek. If you begin making a slave of yourself to that Miller, he'll very soon cut you down to a glass of water a day, with a pinch of rhubarb in it, and make you drink that standing on your head."

"Gammon; but I don't think it's fair on the rest of the crew not to train as well as one can."

"You don't suppose drinking a pint of hock to-night will make you pull any the worse this day six weeks, when the races begin, do you?"

"No; but – "

"Hullo! look here," said Drysdale, who was inspecting a printed bill pinned up on the wall of the coffee hall; "Wombwell's menagerie is in the town, somewhere down by Worcester. What fun! We'll go there after dinner."

The food arrived with Drysdale's hock, which he seemed to enjoy all the more from the assurance which every glass gave him that he was defying the coxswain, and doing just the thing he would most dislike. So he drank away, and facetiously speculated

how he could be such an idiot as to go on pulling. Every day of his life he made good resolutions in the reach above the Gut that it should be his last performance, and always broke them next day. He supposed the habit he had of breaking all good resolutions was the way to account for it.

After dinner they set off to find the wild-beast show; and, as they will be at least a quarter of an hour reaching it, for the pitch is in a part of the suburbs little known to gownsmen, the opportunity may be seized of making a few remarks to the patient reader, which impatient readers are begged to skip.

Our hero on his first appearance in public some years since, was without his own consent at once patted on the back by the good-natured critics, and enrolled for better or worse in the brotherhood of muscular Christians, who at that time were beginning to be recognised as an actual and lusty portion of general British life. As his biographer, I am not about to take exception to his enrolment; for, after considering the persons up and down Her Majesty's dominions to whom the new nick-name has been applied, the principles which they are supposed to hold, and the sort of lives they are supposed to lead; I cannot see where he could in these times have fallen upon a nobler brotherhood. I am speaking of course under correction, and with only a slight acquaintance with the faith of muscular Christianity, gathered almost entirely from the witty expositions and comments of persons of a somewhat dyspeptic habit, who are not amongst the faithful themselves. Indeed, I am not aware that any authorized

articles of belief have been sanctioned or published by the sect, Church, or whatever they may be. Moreover, at the age at which our hero has arrived, and having regard to his character, I should say that he has in all likelihood thought very little on the subject of belief, and would scarcely be able to give any formal account of his own, beyond that contained in the Church Catechism, which I for one think may very well satisfy him for the present. Nevertheless, he had suddenly been caught at the gate of St. Ambrose's College, by one of the gentlemen who do the classifying for the British public, and accosted with, "Sir, you belong to a body whose creed it is to fear God, and walk 1000 miles in 1000 hours;" I believe he would have replied, "Do I, sir? I'm very glad to hear it. They must be a very good set of fellows. How many weeks' training, do they allow?"

But in the course of my inquiries on the subject of muscular Christians, their works and ways, a fact has forced itself on my attention, which, for the sake of ingenious youth, ought not to be passed over. I find, then, that, side by side with these muscular Christians, and apparently claiming some sort of connection with them (the same concern, as the pirates of trade-marks say), have risen up another set of persons, against whom I desire to caution my readers and my hero, and to warn the latter that I do not mean on any pretense whatever to allow him to connect himself with them, however much he may be taken with their off-hand, "hail brother well-met" manner and dress, which may easily lead careless observers to take the counterfeit for the true article. I

must call the persons in question "musclemen," as distinguished from muscular Christians; the only point in common between the two being, that both hold it to be a good thing to have strong and well-exercised bodies, ready to be put at the shortest notice to any work of which bodies are capable, and to do it well. Here all likeness ends; for the "muscle" man seems to have no belief whatever as to the purposes for which his body has been given him, except some hazy idea that it is to go up and down the world with him, belaboring men or captivating women for his benefit or pleasure, at once the servant and fomentor of those fierce and brutal passions which he seems to think it a necessity, and rather a fine thing than otherwise, to indulge and obey. Whereas, so far as I know, the least of the muscular Christians has hold of the old chivalrous and Christian belief, that a man's body is given him to be trained and brought into subjection, and then used for the protection of the weak, the advancement of all righteous causes, and the subduing of the earth which God has given to the children of men. He does not hold that mere strength or activity are in themselves worthy of any respect or worship, or that one man is a bit better than another because he can knock him down, or carry a bigger sack of potatoes than he. For mere power, whether of body or intellect, he has (I hope and believe) no reverence whatever, though, *coeteris paribus*, he would probably himself, as a matter of taste, prefer the man who can lift a hundred-weight round his head with his little finger to the man who can construct a string of perfect Sorites, or expound the doctrine of

"contradictory inconceivables."

The above remarks occur as our hero is marching innocently down towards his first "town and gown" row, and I should scarcely like to see him in the middle of it, without protesting that it is a mistake. I know that he, and other youngsters of his kidney, will have fits of fighting or desiring to fight with their poorer brethren, just as children have the measles. But the shorter the fit the better for the patient, for like the measles it is a great mistake, and a most unsatisfactory complaint. If they can escape it altogether so much the better. But instead of treating the fit as a disease, "musclemen" professors are wont to represent it as a state of health, and to let their disciples run about in middle age with the measles on them as strong as ever. Now although our hero had the measles on him at this particular time, and the passage of arms which I am about shortly to describe led to results of some importance in his history, and cannot therefore be passed over, yet I wish at the same time to disclaim, both in my sponsorial and individual character, all sympathy with town and gown rows, and with all other class rows and quarrels of every sort and kind, whether waged with sword, pen, tongue, fist or otherwise. Also to say that in all such rows, so far as I have seen or read, from the time when the Roman plebs marched out to Mons Sacer, down to 1848, when the English chartists met on Kennington Common, the upper classes are most to blame. It may be that they are not the aggressors on any given occasion; very possibly they may carry on the actual fighting with more

fairness (though this is by no means true as a rule); nevertheless the state of feeling which makes such things possible, especially in England, where men in general are only too ready to be led and taught by their superiors in rank, may be fairly laid at their door. Ever, in the case of strikes, which just now will of course be at once thrown in my teeth, I say fearlessly, let any man take the trouble to study the question honestly, and he will come to the conviction that all combinations of the men for the purpose of influencing the labor market, whether in the much and unjustly abused Trades' Societies, or in other forms, have been defensive organizations, and that the masters might, as a body, over and over again have taken the sting out of them if they had acted fairly, as many individuals amongst them have done. Whether it may not be too late now, is a tremendous question for England, but one which time only can decide.

When Drysdale and Tom at last found the caravans, it was just getting dark. Something of a crowd had collected outside, and there was some hissing as they ascended the short flight of steps which led to the platform in front of the show; but they took no notice of it, paid their money, and entered.

Inside they found an exciting scene. The place was pretty well lighted, and the birds and beasts were all alive in their several dens and cages, walking up and down, and each uttering remonstrances after its own manner, the shrill notes of birds mingling with the moan of the beasts of prey and chattering of the monkeys. Feeding time had been put off till night to

suit the undergraduates, and the undergraduates were proving their appreciation of the attention by playing off all manner of practical jokes on birds and beasts, their keepers, and such of the public as had been rash enough to venture in. At the farther end was the keeper, who did the showman, vainly endeavouring to go through his usual jogtrot description. His monotone was drowned every minute by the chorus of voices, each shouting out some new fact in natural history touching the biped or quadruped whom the keeper was attempting to describe. At that day a great deal of this sort of chaff was current, so that the most dunder-headed boy had plenty on the tip of his tongue. A small and indignant knot of townspeople, headed by a stout and severe middle-aged woman, with two big boys, her sons, followed the keeper, endeavouring by caustic remarks and withering glances to stop the flood of chaff, and restore the legitimate authority and the reign of keeper and natural history.

At another point was a long Irishman in cap and gown, who had clearly had as much wine as he could carry, close to the bars of the panther's den, through which he was earnestly endeavouring, with the help of a crooked stick, to draw the tail of whichever of the beasts stopped for a moment in its uneasy walk. On the other side were a set of men bent on burning the wretched monkeys' fingers with the lighted ends of their cigars, in which they seemed successful enough, to judge by the angry chatterings and shriekings of their victims.

The two new comers paused for a moment on the platform

inside the curtain; and then Drysdale, rubbing his hands, and in high glee at the sight of so much misrule in so small a place, led the way down on to the floor deep in sawdust, exclaiming, "Well, this*is* a lark! We're just in for all the fun of the fair."

Tom followed his friend, who made straight for the show man, and planted himself at his side, just as that worthy, pointing with his pole, was proceeding —

"This is the jackal, from – "

"The Caribee Hielands, of which I'm a native mysel'," shouted a gownsman.

"This is the jackal, or lion's provider," began again the much enduring keeper.

"Who always goes before the lion to purwide his purwisions, purwiding there's anything to purwide," put in Drysdale.

"Hem – really I do think it's scandalous not to let the keeper tell about the beasteses," said the unfortunate matron, with a half turn towards the persecutors, and grasping her bag.

"My dear madam," said Drysdale, in his softest voice, "I assure you he knows nothing about the beasteses. We are Doctor Buckland's favourite pupils, are also well known to the great Panjandrum, and have eaten more beasteses than the keeper has ever seen."

"I don't know who you are, young man, but you don't know how to behave yourselves," rejoined the outraged female; and the keeper, giving up the jackal as a bad job, pointing with his pole, proceeded —

"The little hanimal in the upper cage is the hopossom, of North America – "

"The misguided offspring of the raccoon and the gumtree," put in one of his tormentors.

Here a frightful roaring and struggling at a little distance, mingled with shouts of laughter, and "Hold on, Pat!" "Go it, panther!" interrupted the lecture, and caused a rush to the other side, where the long Irishman, Donovan, by name, with one foot against the bars, was holding on to the tail of one of the panthers, which he had at length managed to catch hold of. The next moment he was flat on his back in the sawdust, and his victim was bounding wildly about the cage. The keeper hurried away to look after the outraged panther; and Drysdale, at once installing himself as showman, began at the next cage —

"This is the wild man of the woods, or whangee-tangee, the most untameable – good heavens, ma'am, take care!" and he seized hold on the unfortunate woman and pulled her away from the bars.

"Oh, goodness!" she screamed, "it's got my tippet; oh, Bill, Peter, catch hold!" Bill and Peter proved unequal to the occasion, but a gownsman seized the vanishing tippet, and after a moment's struggle with the great ape, restored a meagre half to the proper owner, while Jacko sat grinning over the other half, picking it to pieces. The poor woman had now had enough of it, and she hurried off with her two boys, followed by the few townspeople who were still in the show, to lay her case directly before

the mayor, as she informed the delinquents from the platform before disappearing. Her wrongs were likely to be more speedily avenged, to judge by the angry murmurs which arose outside immediately after her exit.

But still the high jinks went on, Donovan leading all mischief, until the master of the menagerie appeared inside, and remonstrated with the men. "He must send for the police," he said, "if they would not leave the beasts alone. He had put off the feeding in order to suit them; would they let his keepers feed the beasts quietly?" The threat of the police was received with shouts of defiance by some of the men, though the greater part seemed of the opinion that matters were getting serious.

The proposal of feeding, was however, welcomed by all and comparative quiet ensued for some ten minutes, while the baskets of joints, bread, stale fish, and potatoes were brought in, and the contents distributed to the famished occupants of the cages. In the interval of peace the showman-keeper, on a hint from his master, again began his round. But the spirit of mischief was abroad, and it only needed this to make it break out again. In another two minutes the beasts, from the lion to the smallest monkey, were struggling for their suppers, with one or more undergraduates; the elephant had torn the gown off Donovan's back, having only just missed his arm; the manager in a confusion worthy of the tower of Babel, sent off a keeper for the city police, and turned the gas out.

The audience, after the first moment of surprise and

indignation, groped their way towards the steps and mounted the platform, where they held a council of war. Should they stay where they were or make a sally at once, break through the crowd and get back to their colleges? It was curious to see how in that short minute individual character came out, and the coward, the cautious man, the resolute prompt Englishman, each was there, and more than one species of each. Donovan was one of the last up the steps, and as he stumbled up caught something of the question before the house. He shouted loudly at once for descending and offering battle. "But boys," he added, "first wait till I adthress the meeting," and he made for the opening in the canvas through which the outside platform was reached. Stump oratory and a free fight were just the two temptations which Donovan was wholly unable to resist; it was with a face radiant with devil-may-care delight that he burst through the opening, followed by all the rest (who felt that the matter was out of their hands, and must go its own way after the Irishman), and rolling to the front of the outside platform, rested one hand on the rail, and waved the other gracefully towards the crowd.

This was the signal for a burst of defiant shouts and hissing. Donovan stood blandly waving his hand for silence. Drysdale, running his eye over the mob, turned to the rest and said, "There's nothing to stop us, not twenty grown men in the whole lot."

Then one of the men lighting upon the drumsticks, which the usual man in corduroys had hidden away, began beating the big drum furiously. One of the unaccountable whims which

influence crowds seized on the mob, and there was almost perfect silence. This seemed to take Donovan by surprise; the open air was having the common effect on him; he was getting unsteady on his legs, and his brains were wondering. "Now's your time, Donovan, my boy – begin."

"Ah, yes, to be sure, what'll I say? let's see," said Donovan, putting his head on one side —

"Friends, Romans, countrymen," suggested some wag.

"To be sure," cried Donovan; "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears."

"Bravo Pat, well begun; pull their ears well when you've got 'em."

"Bad luck to it! where was I? you divels – I mean ladies and gentlemen of Oxford city as I was saying, the poets-"

Then the storm of shouting and hissing arose again, and Donovan, after an ineffectual attempt or two to go on, leaned forward and shook his fist generally at the mob. Luckily for him, there were no stones about; but one of the crowd, catching the first missel at hand, which happened to be a cabbage stalk, sent it with true aim at the enraged orator. He jerked his head on one side to avoid it; the motion unsteadied his cap; he threw up his hand, which, instead of catching the falling cap, as it was meant to do, sent it spinning among the crowd below. The owner, without a moment's hesitation, clapped both hands on the bar before him, and followed his property, vaulting over on the heads of those nearest the platform, amongst whom he fell, scattering

them right and left.

"Come on, gown, or he'll be murdered," sang out one of Donovan's friends. Tom was one of the first down the steps; they rushed to the spot in another moment, and the Irishman rose, plastered with dirt, but otherwise none the worse for his feat; his cap, covered with mud, was proudly stuck on, hind part before. He was of course thirsting for battle, but not quite so much master of his strength as usual; so his two friends, who were luckily strong and big men, seized him, one to each arm.

"Come along, keep together," was the word; "there's no time to lose. Push for the corn-market."

The cry of "Town! town!" now rose on all sides. The gownsmen in a compact body, with Donovan in the middle, pushed rapidly across the open space in which the caravans were set up and gained the street. Here they were comparatively safe; they were followed close, but could not be surrounded by the mob. And now again a bystander might have amused himself by noting the men's characters. Three or four pushed rapidly on, and were out of sight ahead in no time. The greater part, without showing any actual signs off fear, kept steadily on, at a good pace. Close behind these, Donovan struggled violently with his two conductors, and shouted defiance to the town; while a small and silent rear guard, amongst whom were Tom and Drysdale, walked slowly and, to all appearance, carelessly behind, within a few yards of the crowd of shouting boys who headed the advancing town. Tom himself felt his heart beating quick, and

I don't think had any particular desire for the fighting to begin, with such long odds on the town side; but he was resolved to be in it as soon as any one if there was to be any. Thus they marched through one or two streets without anything more serious than an occasional stone passing their ears. Another turn would have brought them into the open parts of the town, within hearing of the colleges, when suddenly Donovan broke loose from his supporters, and rushing with a shout on the advanced guard of the town, drove them back in confusion for some yards. The only thing to do was to back him up; so the rear-guard, shouting "Gown! gown!" charged after him. The effect of the onset was like that of Blount at Flodden, when he saw Marmion's banner go down, – a wide space was cleared for a moment, the town driven back on the pavements, and up the middle of the street, and the rescued Donovan caught, set on his legs, and dragged away again some paces towards college. But the charging body was too few in number to improve the first success, or even to insure its own retreat. "Darkly closed the war around." The town lapped on them from the pavements, and poured on them down the middle of the street, before they had time to rally and stand together again.

What happened to the rest – who was down, who fought, who fled, – Tom had no time to inquire; for he found himself suddenly the centre of a yelling circle of enemies. So he set his teeth and buckled to his work; and the thought of splendid single combat, and glory such as he had read of in college stories, and tradition

handing him down as the hero of that great night, flashed into his head as he cast his eye round for foemen worthy of his steel. None such appeared; so, selecting the one most of his own size, he squared and advanced on him. But the challenged one declined the combat, and kept retreating; while from behind, and at the sides, one after another of the "town" rushing out dealt Tom a blow and vanished again into the crowd. For a moment or two he kept his head and temper; the assailants individually were too insignificant to put out his strength upon; but head and temper were rapidly going; – he was like a bull in the arena with the picadores sticking their little javelins in him. A smart blow on the nose, which set a myriad of stars dancing before his eyes, finished the business, and he rushed after the last assailant, dealing blows to right and left, on small and great. The mob closed in on him, still avoiding attacks in front, but on the flank and rear they hung on him and battered at him. He had to turn sharply round after every step to shake himself clear, and at each turn the press thickened, the shouts waxed louder and fiercer; he began to get unsteady; tottered, swayed, and, stumbling over a prostrate youth, at last went down full length on to the pavement, carrying a couple of his assailants with him. And now it would have fared hardly with him, and he would scarcely have reached college with sound bones, – for I am sorry to say an Oxford town mob is a cruel and brutal one, and a man who is down has no chance with it, – but that for one moment he and his prostrate foes were so jumbled together that the town could not get at him, and the next

cry of "Gown! gown!" rose high above the din; the town were swept back again by the rush of a reinforcement of gownsmen, the leader of whom seized him by the shoulders and put him on his legs again; while his late antagonists crawled away to the side of the road.

"Why, Brown!" said his rescuer, – Jervis, the Captain, – "this, you? Not hurt, eh?"

"Not a bit," said Tom.

"Good; come on, then; stick to me." In three steps they joined the rest of the gown, now numbering some twenty men. The mob was close before them, gathering for another rush. Tom felt a cruel, wild devil beginning to rise in him; he had never felt the like before. This time he longed for the next crash, which happily for him, was fated never to come off.

"Your names and colleges, gentlemen," said a voice close behind them at this critical moment. The "town" set up a derisive shout, and, turning round, the gownsmen found the velvet sleeves of one of the proctors at their elbow and his satellites, vulgarly called bull-dogs, taking notes of them. They were completely caught, and so quietly gave the required information.

"You will go to your colleges at once," said the proctor, "and remain within gates. You will see these gentlemen to the High-street," he added to his marshal; and then strode on after the crowd, which was vanishing down the street.

The men turned and strolled towards the High-street, the marshall keeping, in a deferential but wide-awake manner, pretty

close to them, but without making any show of watching them. When they reached the High-street he touched his hat and said civilly, "I hope you will go home now, gentlemen, the senior proctor is very strict."

"All right, marshall; good night," said the good natured ones.

"D – his impudence," growled one or two of the rest, and the marshal bustled away after his master. The men looked at one another for a moment or two. They were of different colleges, and strangers. The High-street was quiet; so without the exchange of a word, after the manner of British youth, they broke up into twos and threes, and parted. Jervis, Tom, and Drysdale, who turned up quite undamaged, sauntered together towards St. Ambrose's.

"I say, where are you going?" said Drysdale.

"Not to college, I vote," said Tom.

"No, there may be some more fun."

"Mighty poor fun, I should say, you'll find it," said Jervis; "however, if you will stay, I suppose I must. I can't leave you two boys by yourselves."

"Come along then, down here." So they turned down one of the courts leading out of the High-street, and so by back streets bore up again for the disturbed districts.

"Mind and keep a sharp lookout for the proctors," said Jervis; "as much row as you please, but we mustn't be caught again."

"Well, only let's keep together if we have to bolt."

They promenaded in lonely dignity for some five minutes,

keeping eyes and ears on full strain.

"I tell you what," said Drysdale, at last, "it isn't fair, these enemies in the camp; what with the 'town' and their stones and fists, and the proctors with their 'name and college,' we've got the wrong end of the stick."

"Both wrong ends, I can tell you," said Jervis. "Hello, Brown, your nose is bleeding."

"Is it?" said Tom, drawing his hand across his mouth; "'twas that confounded little fellow then who ran up to my side while I was squaring at the long party. I felt a sharp crack, and the little rascal bolted into the crowd before I could turn at him."

"Cut and come again," said Drysdale, laughing.

"Ay, that's the regular thing in these blackguard street squabbles. Here they come then," said Jervis. "Steady, all."

They turned around to face the town, which came shouting down the street behind them in pursuit of one gownsman, a little, harmless, quiet fellow, who had fallen them on his way back to his college from a tea with his tutor, and, like a wise man, was giving them leg-bail as hard as he could foot it. But the little man was of a courageous, though prudent soul, and turned panting and gasping on his foes the moment he found himself amongst friends again.

"Now, then, stick together; don't let them get around us," said Jervis.

They walked steadily down the street, which was luckily a narrow one, so that three of them could keep the whole of

it, halting and showing front every few yards, when the crowd pressed too much. "Down with them! Town, town! That's two as was in the show." "Mark the velvet-capped chap. Town, town!" shouted the hinder part of the mob, but it was a rabble of boys as before, and the front rank took very good care of itself, and forbore from close quarters.

The small gownsman had now got his wind again; and smarting under the ignominy of his recent flight, was always a pace or two nearer the crowd than the other three, ruffling up like a little bantam, and shouting defiance between the catchings of his breath.

"You vagabonds! you cowards! Come on now I say! Gown, gown!" And at last, emboldened by the repeated halts of the mob, and thirsting for revenge, he made a dash at one of the nearest of the enemy. The suddenness of the attack took both sides by surprise, then came a rush by two or three of the town to the rescue.

"No, no! stand back – one at a time," shouted the Captain, throwing himself between the combatants and the mob. "Go it, little 'un; serve him out. Keep the rest back boys; steady!" Tom and Drysdale faced towards the crowd, while a little gownsman and his antagonist – who defended himself vigorously enough now – came to close quarters, in the rear of the gown line; too close to hurt one another but what with hugging and cuffing the townsman in another half-minute was sitting quietly on the pavement with his back against the wall, his enemy squaring in

front of him, and daring him to renew the combat. "Get up, you coward; get up, I say, you coward! He won't get up," said the little man, eagerly turning to the Captain. "Shall I give him a kick?"

"No, let the cur alone," replied Jervis. "Now, do any more of you want to fight? Come on like men one at a time. I'll fight any man in the crowd."

Whether the challenge would have been answered must rest uncertain; for now the crowd began to look back, and a cry arose, "Here they are, proctors! now they'll run."

"So we must, by Jove, Brown," said the Captain. "What's your college?" to the little hero.

"Pembroke."

"Cut away, then; you're close at home."

"Very well, if I must; good night," and away went the small man as fast as he had come; and it has never been heard that he came to further grief, or performed other feats that night.

"Hang it, don't let's run," said Drysdale.

"Is it the proctors?" said Tom. "I can't see them."

"Mark the bloody-faced one; kick him over," sang out a voice in the crowd.

"Thank'ee," said Tom, savagely. "Let's have one rush at them."

"Look! there's the proctor's cap just through them; come along boys – well, stay if you like, and be rusticated, I'm off," and away went Jervis, and the next moment Tom and Drysdale followed the good example, and, as they had to run, made the best use of their legs, and in two minutes were well ahead of

their pursuers. They turned a corner; "Here, Brown! alight in this public, cut in, and it's all right." Next moment they were in the dark passage of a quiet little inn, and heard with a chuckle part of the crowd scurry by the door in pursuit, while they themselves suddenly appeared in the neat little bar, to the no small astonishment of its occupants. These were a stout elderly woman in spectacles, who was stitching away at plain work in an arm-chair on one side of the fire; the foreman of one of the great boat-builders, who sat opposite her, smoking his pipe with a long glass of clear ale at his elbow; and a bright-eyed, neat handed bar maid, who was leaning against the table, and talking to the others as they entered.

CHAPTER XII
THE CAPTAIN'S NOTIONS

The old lady dropped her work, the barmaid turned round with a start and little ejaculation, and the foreman stared with all his eyes for a moment, and then, jumping up, exclaimed —

"Bless us, if it isn't Muster Drysdale and Muster Brown, of Ambrose's. Why what's the matter, sir? Muster Brown, you be all covered wi' blood, sir."

"Oh dear me! poor young gentlemen!" cried the hostess; – "Here, Patty, run and tell Dick to go for the doctor, and get the best room – "

"No, please don't; it's nothing at all," interrupted Tom, laughing; – "a basin of cold water and a towel, if you please, Miss Patty, and I shall be quite presentable in a minute. I'm very sorry to have frightened you all."

Drysdale joined in the assurances that it was nothing but a little of his friend's "claret," which he would be all the better for losing, and watched with an envious eye the interest depicted in Patty's pretty face, as she hurried in with a basin of fresh pumped water, and held the towel. Tom bathed his face, and very soon was as respectable a member of society as usual, save for a slight swelling on one side of his nose.

Drysdale meantime – seated on the table – had been

explaining the circumstances to the landlady and the foreman. "And now, ma'am," said he as Tom joined them, and seated himself on a vacant chair, "I'm sure you must draw famous ale."

"Indeed, sir, I think Dick – that's my ostler, sir – is as good a brewer as is in the town. We always brew at home, sir, and I hope always shall."

"Quite right, ma'am, quite right," said Drysdale; "and I don't think we can do better than follow Jem here. Let us have a jug of the same ale as he is drinking. And you'll take a glass with us, Jem? or will you have spirits?"

Jem was for another glass of ale, and bore witness to its being the best in Oxford, and Patty drew the ale, and supplied two more long glasses. Drysdale, with apologies, produced his cigar case; and Jem, under the influence of the ale and a first-rate Havannah (for which he deserted his pipe, though he did not enjoy it half as much), volunteered to go and rouse the yard and conduct them safely back to college. This offer was of course, politely declined and then, Jem's hour for bed having come, he being a methodical man, as became his position, departed, and left our two young friends in sole possession of the bar. Nothing could have suited the two young gentlemen better, and they set to work to make themselves agreeable. They listened with lively interest to the landlady's statement of the difficulties of a widow woman in a house like hers, and to her praises of her factotum Dick and her niece Patty. They applauded her resolution of not bringing up her two boys in the publican line, though they could offer no

very available answer her appeals for advice as to what trade they should be put to; all trades were so full, and things were not as they ought to be. The one thing, apparently, which was wanting to the happiness of Drysdale at Oxford, was the discovery of such beer as he had at last found at "The Choughs."

Dick was to come up to St. Ambrose's the first thing in the morning and carry off his barrel, which would never contain in future any other liquid. At last that worthy appeared in the bar to know when he was to shut up, and was sent out by his mistress to see that the street was clear, for which service he received a shilling, though his offer of escort was declined. And so, after paying in a splendid manner for their entertainment, they found themselves in the street, and set off for college, agreeing on the way that "The Choughs" was a great find, the old lady was the best old soul in the world, and Patty the prettiest girl in Oxford. They found the streets quiet, and walking quickly along them, knocked at the college gates at half-past eleven. The stout porter received them with a long face.

"Senior proctor's sent down here an hour back, gentlemen, to find whether you was in college."

"You don't mean that, porter? How kind of him! What did you say?"

"Said I didn't know, sir; but the marshal said, if you come in after, that you was to go to the senior proctor's at half-past nine to-morrow."

"Send my compliments to the senior proctor," said Drysdale,

"and say I have a very particular engagement to morrow morning, which will prevent my having the pleasure of calling on him."

"Very good, sir," said the porter, giving a little dry chuckle, and tapping the keys against his leg; "only perhaps you wouldn't mind writing him a note, sir, as he is rather a particular gentleman."

"Didn't he send after anyone else?" said Tom.

"Yes, sir, Mr. Jervis, sir."

"Well, and what about him?"

"Oh, sir, Mr. Jervis! an old hand, sir. He'd been in gates long time, sir, when the marshal came."

"The sly old beggar!" said Drysdale, "good night, porter; mind you send my message to the proctor. If he is set on seeing me to-morrow, you can say that he will find a broiled chicken and a hand at picquet in my rooms, if he likes to drop in to lunch."

The porter looked after them for a moment, and then retired to his deep old chair in the lodge, pulled his night cap over his ears, put up his feet before the fire on a high stool, and folded his hands on his lap. "The most impidentest thing on the face of the earth is it gen'l'man-commoner in his first year," soliloquized the little man. "'Twould ha' done that one a sight of good, now, if he'd got a good hiding in the street to-night. But he's better than most on 'em, too," he went on; "uncommon free with his tongue, but just as free with his arf-sovereigns. Well, I'm not going to peach if the proctor don't send again in the morning. That sort's good for the college; makes things brisk; has his *wine* from town,

and don't keep no keys. I wonder, now, if my Peter's been out a fighting? He's pretty nigh as hard to manage, is that boy, as if he was at college hisself."

And so, muttering over his domestic and professional grievances, the small janitor composed himself to a nap. I may add, parenthetically, that his hopeful Peter, a precocious youth of seventeen, scout's boy on No. 3 staircase of St. Ambrose's College, was represented in the boot cleaning and errand line by a substitute for some days; and when he returned to duty was minus a front tooth.

"What fools we were not to stick to the Captain. I wonder what we shall get," said Tom, who was troubled in his mind at the proctor's message, and not gifted naturally with the recklessness and contempt of authority which in Drysdale's case approached the sublime.

"Who cares? I'll be bound, now, the old fox came straight home to earth. Let's go and knock him up."

Tom assented, for he was anxious to consult Jervis as to his proceedings in the morning; so they soon found themselves drumming at his oak, which was opened shortly by "the stroke" in an old boating-jacket. They followed him in. At one end of his table stood his tea-service and the remains of his commons, which the scout had not cleared away; at the other, open books, note-books, and maps showed that the Captain read, as he rowed, "hard all."

"Well, are you two only just in?"

"Only just, my Captain," answered Drysdale.

"Have you been well thrashed, then? You don't look much damaged?"

"We are innocent of fight since your sudden departure – flight, shall I call it? – my Captain."

"Where have you been?"

"Where! why in the paragon of all pot houses; snug little bar with red curtains; stout old benevolent female in spectacles; barmaid an houri; and for malt the most touching tap in Oxford, wasn't it, Brown?"

"Yes, the beer was undeniable," said Tom.

"Well, and you dawdled there till now?" said Jervis.

"Even so. What with mobs that wouldn't fight fair, the captains who would run away, and the proctors marshals who would interfere, we were 'perfectly disgusted with the whole proceedings,' as the Scotchman said when he was sentenced to be hanged."

"Well! Heaven, they say, protects children, sailors, and drunken men; and whatever answer to Heaven in the academical system protects freshmen," remarked Jervis.

"Not us, at any rate," said Tom, "for we are to go to the proctor to-morrow morning."

"What, did he catch you in your famous public?"

"No; the marshal came round to the porter's lodge, asked if we were in, and left word that, if we were not, we were to go to him in the morning. The porter told us just now as we came in."

"Pshaw," said the Captain, with disgust; "now you'll be gated probably, and the whole crew will be thrown out of gear. Why couldn't you have come home when I did?"

"We do not propose to attend the levee of that excellent person in office to-morrow morning," said Drysdale. "He will forget all about it. Old Copas won't say a word – catch him. He gets too much out of me for that."

"Well, you'll see; I'll back the proctor's memory."

"But, Captain, what are you going to stand?"

"Stand! nothing, unless you like a cup of cold tea. You'll get no wine or spirits here at this time of night, and the buttery is shut. Besides you've had quite as much beer as good for you at your paragon public."

"Come, now, Captain, just two glasses of sherry, and I'll promise to go to bed."

"Not a thimbleful."

"You old tyrant!" said Drysdale, hopping off his perch on the elbow of the sofa. "Come along, Brown, let's go and draw for some supper, and a hand at Van John. There's sure to be something going up my staircase; or, at any rate, there's a cool bottle of claret in my rooms."

"Stop and have a talk, Brown," said the Captain, and prevailed against Drysdale, who, after another attempt to draw Tom off, departed on his quest for drink and cards.

"He'll never do for the boat, I'm afraid," said the Captain; "with his rascally late hours, and drinking and eating all sorts of

trash. It's a pity, too for he's a pretty oar for his weight."

"He is such uncommon good company, too," said Tom.

"Yes; but I'll tell you what. He's just a leetle too good company for you and me, or any fellows who mean to take a degree. Let's see, this is only his third term? I'll give him, perhaps, two more to make the place too hot to hold him. Take my word for it, he'll never get to his little-go."

"It will be a great pity, then," said Tom.

"So it will. But after all, you see, what does it matter to him? He gets rusticated; takes his name off with a flourish of trumpets – what then? He falls back on 5,000L a year in land, and a good accumulation in consols, runs abroad or lives in town for a year. Takes the hounds when he comes of age, or is singled out by some discerning constituency, and sent to make laws for his country, having spent the whole of his life hitherto in breaking all the laws he ever came under. You and I, perhaps, go fooling about with him, and get rusticated. We make our friends miserable. We can't take our names off, but have to come cringing back at the end of our year, marked men. Keep our tails between our legs for the rest of the time. Lose a year at our professions, and most likely have the slip casting up against us in one way or another for the next twenty years. It's like the old story of the giant and the dwarf, or like fighting a sweep, or any other one-sided business."

"But I'd sooner have to fight my own way in the world after all; wouldn't you?" said Tom.

"H-m-m!" said the Captain, throwing himself back in the

chair, and smiling; "can't answer off hand. I'm a third year man, and begin to see the other side rather clearer than I did when I was a freshman like you. Three years at Oxford, my boy, will teach you something of what rank and money count for, if they teach you nothing else."

"Why, here's the Captain singing the same song as Hardy," thought Tom.

"So you two have to go to the proctor to-morrow?"

"Yes."

"Shall you go? Drysdale won't."

"Of course I shall. It seems to me childish not to go; as if I were back in the lower school again. To tell you the truth, the being sent for isn't pleasant; but the other I couldn't stand."

"Well, I don't feel anything of that sort. But I think you're right on the whole. The chances are that he'll remember your name, and send for you again if you don't go; and then you'll be worse off."

"You don't think he'll rusticate us, or anything of that sort?" said Tom, who had felt horrible twinges at the Captain's picture of the effects of rustication on ordinary mortals.

"No; not unless he's in a very bad humour. I was caught three times in one night in my freshman's term, and only got an imposition."

"Then I don't care," said Tom. "But it's a bore to have been caught in so seedy an affair; if it had been a real good row, one wouldn't have minded so much."

"Why, what did you expect? It was neither better nor worse than the common run of such things."

"Well, but three parts of the crowd were boys."

"So they are always – or nine times out of ten at any rate."

"But there was no real fighting; at least, I only know I got none."

"There isn't any real fighting, as you call it, nine times out of ten."

"What is there, then?"

"Why, something of this sort. Five shopboys, or scouts' boys, full of sauciness, loitering at an out-of-the-way street corner. Enter two freshmen, full of dignity and bad wine. Explosion of inflammable material. Freshmen mobbed into High-street or Broad-street, where the tables are turned by a gathering of many more freshmen, and the mob of town boys quietly subsides, puts its hands in its pockets, and ceases to shout 'Town, town!' The triumphant freshmen march up and down for perhaps half an hour, shouting 'Gown, gown!' and looking furious, but not half sorry that the mob vanishes like mist at their approach. Then come the proctors, who hunt down, and break up the gown in some half-hour or hour. The 'town' again marches about in the ascendant, and mobs the scattered freshmen, wherever they can be caught in very small numbers."

"But with all your chaff about freshmen, Captain, you were in it yourself to-night; come now."

"Of course, I had to look after you two boys."

"But you didn't know we were in when you came up?"

"I was sure to find some of you. Besides, I'll admit one don't like to go in while there's any chance of a real row as you call it, and so gets proctorized in one's old age for one's patriotism."

"Were you ever in a real row?" said Tom.

"Yes, once, about a year ago. The fighting numbers were about equal, and the town all grown men, labourers and mechanics. It was desperate hard work, none of your shouting and promenading. That Hardy, one of our Bible clerks, fought like a Paladin; I know I shifted a fellow in corduroys on to him, whom I had found an uncommon tough customer, and never felt better pleased in my life than when I saw the light glance on his hobnails as he went over into the gutter two minutes afterwards. It lasted, perhaps, ten minutes, and both sides were very glad to draw off."

"But, of course, you licked them?"

"We said we did."

"Well, I believe that a gentleman will always lick in a fair fight."

"Of course you do, it's the orthodox belief."

"But don't you?"

"Yes; if he is as big and strong, and knows how to fight as well as the other. The odds are that he cares a little more for giving in, and that will pull him through."

"That isn't saying much, though."

"No, but it's quite as much as is true. I'll tell you what it

is, I think just this, that we are generally better in the fighting way than shopkeepers, clerks, flunkies, and all fellows who don't work hard with their bodies all day. But the moment you come to the real hard-fisted fellow; used to nine or ten hours' work a day, he's a cruel hard customer. Take seventy or eighty of them at haphazard, the first you meet, and turn them into St. Ambrose any morning – by night I take it they would be lords of this venerable establishment if we had to fight for the possession; except, perhaps, for that Hardy – he's one of a thousand, and was born for a fighting man; perhaps he might pull us through."

"Why don't you try him in the boat?"

"Miller manages all that. I spoke to him about it after that row, but he said that Hardy had refused to subscribe to the club, said he couldn't afford it, or something of the sort. I don't see why that need matter, myself, but I suppose, as we have rules, we ought to stick to them."

"It's a great pity though. I know Hardy well, and you can't think what a fine fellow he is."

"I'm sure of that. I tried to know him, and we don't get on badly as speaking acquaintance. But he seems a queer, solitary bird."

Twelve o'clock struck; so Tom wished the Captain good night and departed, meditating much on what he had heard and seen. The vision of terrible single combats, in which the descendant of a hundred earls polishes off the huge representative of the masses in the most finished style, without a scratch on his own

aristocratic features, had faded from his mind.

He went to bed that night, fairly sickened with his experience of a town and gown row, and with a nasty taste in his mouth. But he felt much pleased at having drawn out the Captain so completely. For "the stroke" was in general a man of marvellous few words, having many better uses than talking to put his breath to.

Next morning he attended at the proctor's rooms at the appointed time, not without some feeling of shame at having to do so; which, however, wore off when he found some dozen men of other colleges waiting about on the same errand as himself. In his turn he was ushered in, and as he stood by the door, had time to look the great man over as he sat making a note of the case he had just disposed of. The inspection was reassuring. The proctor was a gentlemanly, straight-forward looking man of about thirty, not at all donnish, and his address answered to his appearance.

"Mr. Brown, of St. Ambrose's, I think," he said.

"Yes, sir."

"I sent you to your college yesterday evening; did you go straight home?"

"No, sir."

"How was that, Mr. Brown?"

Tom made no answer, and the proctor looked at him steadily for a few seconds, and then repeated.

"How was that?"

"Well, sir," said Tom, "I don't mean to say I was going straight

to college, but I should have been in long before you sent, only I fell in with the mob again, and then there was a cry that you were coming. And so-" He paused.

"Well," said the proctor, with a grim sort of curl about the corners of his mouth.

"Why, I ran away, and turned into the first place which was open, and stopped till the streets were quiet."

"A public house, I suppose."

"Yes, sir; 'The Choughs.'"

The proctor considered a minute, and again scrutinized Tom's look and manner, which certainly were straightforward, and without any tinge of cringing or insolence.

"How long have you been up?"

"This is my second term, sir."

"You have never been sent to me before, I think?"

"Never, sir."

"Well, I can't overlook this, as you yourself confess to a direct act of disobedience. You must write me out 200 lines of Virgil. And now, Mr. Brown, let me advise you to keep out of disreputable street quarrels in future. Good morning."

Tom hurried away, wondering what it would feel like to be writing out Virgil again as a punishment at his time of life, but glad above measure that the proctor had asked him no questions about his companion. The hero was of course, mightily tickled at the result, and seized the occasion to lecture Tom on his future conduct, holding himself up as a living example of the benefits

which were sure to accrue to a man who never did anything he was told to do. The soundness of his reasoning, however, was somewhat shaken by the dean, who, on the same afternoon, managed to catch him in quad; and, carrying him off, discoursed with him concerning his various and systematic breaches of discipline, pointed out to him that he had already made such good use of his time that if he were to be discommonsed for three more days he would lose his term; and then took of his cross, gave him a book of Virgil to write out and gated him for a fortnight after hall. Drysdale sent out his scout to order his punishment as he might have ordered a waistcoat, presented old Copas with a half-sovereign, and then dismissed punishment and gating from his mind. He cultivated with great success the science of mental gymnastics, or throwing everything the least unpleasant off his mind at once. And no doubt it is a science worthy of all cultivation, if one desires to lead a comfortable life. It gets harder, however, as the years roll over us, to attain to any satisfactory proficiency in it; so it should be mastered as early in life as may be.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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