

more about Tommy until my return. I had no faith in his promises, but I knew that I had left him in safe hands. For the next three days I canvassed and stumped, leaving pleasant reminiscences behind me of attentions paid to the numerous babies, promising predictions concerning their intellectual developments and future advancement, together with a mild but subdued flavour of rum punch. When I returned to Marshboro' I found the whole male and female population in a state of the wildest excitement about Tommy. A catastrophe had occurred in my absence, and after sifting the testimony of several witnesses, I was at last enabled to elicit the following facts:—On the eventful night that I left him, Tommy was conducted to his chamber decidedly "influenced" and quite incapable of pronouncing intelligibly the words "British Constitution," he slept heavily; but being "full of tossings to and fro," his legs at length projected considerably over the bottom of the bed. An ancient rooster that had been long in the habit of passing the night under the bed in which Tommy slept, seeing his naked extremities in such a position, was struck with the thought that here was a most comfortable perch provided for him, in a manner almost providential. Accordingly the old cock planted himself on Tommy's projecting legs and thought he never before enjoyed such a warm commodious roost. All went well until dawn, when according to custom, the rooster flapped his wings and crowed lustily. Tommy awoke. In the dim light of early morning, his brain still muddled, the sight that met his eyes almost froze his blood with terror, there on his shin-bone stood a huge bird of black plumage, far more awful than Poe's raven "perched upon a bust of Pallas just above his chamber door." It seemed to be perfectly at home; "its fiery eyes now burned into his bosom's core." It filled the little room, as Tommy thought, with wild diabolic shrieks. All his past sins flashed upon him. The foul fiend he concluded had come to take him into custody. In a moment he bounded from the bed—the rooster's screams redoubled when his perch was withdrawn—with a swiftness inspired by terror, Tommy rushed from the room—"anywhere, anywhere" from that haunted chamber—and dashed into the first door he saw before him on the landing.—Alas! for poor Tommy!—This chanced to be the bed-room of the servant maid, at the sight of the intruder in his *robe de chambre*, filled the house with her screams. Master and mistress were aroused by the disturbance, and Tommy was detected under the most suspicious circumstances. In vain did he protest and explain. The circumstantial evidence against him was too strong, and Tommy was not merely suspected; in the minds of all the Marshburgers who heard the story, he was absolutely convicted of entertaining the most nefarious designs. The story, as you may suppose, soon got abroad, the servant maid, oldest and ugliest of her sex, was connected with half the leading families in the District, and the result of Tommy's escapade with the rooster, was that he had a narrow escape of coming to an untimely end in fifteen fathoms of cold water, and being what the elegant Mantilini called "a damp noisome body," or else of being imprisoned under a criminal charge in my worthy friend the