

schoolmaster, in a affable, patronising manner; "your hours will only be from eight o'clock to one, and from two to five, which is a mere nothing in the way of work, especially as the classics must be as easy to you as your A, B, C; and that reminds me of the grammar as we use in the school. Don't you think that the Eton Latin grammar might be greatly altered, in point of arrangement, for the better? I've a notion of my own on this point, which I intend to astonish the world with one of these days;" and as he said this, the pedagogue laid his forefinger beside his nose, and put on an air of uncommon acuteness and sagacity.

"Stuff and nonsense, Dobbs!" said his bland helpmate; "you're always talking about the alterations you're going to make in the grammar-books, but you never makes them. I'd rather see you do more and talk less. That's the way to get on; isn't it Mr. Thingembob?"

"With respect to the Eton grammar," resumed the schoolmaster, taking no notice of his wife's interruption, "what do you think, Mr. Raymond, of my project of commencing it at once with syntax? I know that most scholars is in favour of the book as it stands; but when you come to reflect, sir, on the vast importance to youth of a thorough knowledge of syntax, I'm sure that you'll agree with me that they can't be too soon drilled into it. What is it as makes Mrs. Dobbs and I talk so correctly? Why, a knowledge of syntax, in course!—Verbs and substantives is all well enough in their way, but begin, I say, with the great difficulty; get over that first, and all the rest follows as a matter of course. My views, you perceive, are quite original."

"They certainly are, sir, but"—

"But what, my good sir? Speak out, for I'm frank myself, and like frankness in others. Indeed, I ask you for a candid opinion; for no man hates compliments more than I do. I'm glad you think my scheme original, and I'm sure the more you consider it, the more you'll like it."

"Since you wish for a candid opinion, Mr. Dobbs, I don't mind saying that your scheme is somewhat like putting the cart before the horse."

"Humph—indeed—so you think so. Do you?" replied the schoolmaster, looking very red in the face; "well, upon my life, your're candid enough, I must say that; I wish I could say you were as rational."

"I regret, Mr. Dobbs, if any thing I have said has given you offence."

"Offence, Mr. Thingembob—Raymond, I mean! Come, that's a good joke! Do I look as if I was offended? Do I speak as if I was offended? Is my manners such as show I am offended? Upon my life, you must have queer notions of things to suppose I could be offended with such a rubbishy remark, as putting a cart before a horse! Ha, ha, ha! He says I'm offended, Mrs. D! A good joke an't it! He, he, he!"

Amused with this unconscious display of wounded vanity, and feeling the absurdity of attempting to reason the pedant out of his pet crotchet, Raymond proceeded to practise what is called the 'soothing system,' and by so doing, succeeded, in some degree, in allaying Mr. Dobbs's excited temper; shortly after which he took his leave, fully persuaded of the justice of the old adage, that 'naked truth is exceedingly unlovely.'

Arrived at his lodgings, he found his sitting-room looking as tidy and cheerful as it was possible for such an unpromising apartment to look. The curtains were close drawn, the candles were lighted, and a clean white cloth laid upon the table, on which were some cold meat, a brown loaf, a salad, and a bottle of white wine. Julia received him with her wonted cheering kindness of manner; she was dressed with extreme neatness and simplicity—indeed, in her best attire, for she had made holyday on this occasion; and her beauty, if not quite so dazzling as it had once been, wore a more touching character than ever. "I guessed, Henry," she said, "from what you told me this morning of your new employer, that you