

Sparrer, folks might call me, because I hop—though sparrers hasn't game legs, and a crutch, an' a hump on their backs, an' they has wings. But He as made me an' the sparrers looks after us both, the Testament says. Well, sir, some o' them college-men were nice old boys, an' it was improvin' talk to listen to 'em, though they couldn't tell ye much about what they'd seen, except the names o' the ships they'd sailed in, an' the places they'd been at. But the sea seemed to ha' serioused them somehow. They'd a grave way o' talk—there they were a restin' after tossin' about, an' they talked accordin'. It was queer, after walkin' up Teapot Lane, to fall in with one o' those old fellers settin' thinkin' on the grass. The holiday-folk was racin' down One-Tree Hill, an' playin' kiss-in-the-ring on the grass, but there they sot a-thinkin'. They'd wanted God close by 'em when the stormy winds did blow, an' they looked as if they felt Him close to 'em in Greenwich Park. They wasn't all like that. Some on 'em grumbled awful, an' behaved, I've heard, in a way that didn't become nobody—let alone old men like them. An' some—gray-haired old fellers, too—would tell a sight o' crams. One on 'em told my little uns that he'd seen a white bear a-top o' the North Pole, an' pitched him up a biscuit. But bless you, sir, that didn't take in the little uns. They didn't know nothin' about the North Pole, but they saw by the look o' the man that he was a-lyin', an' so they axed me. I couldn't make 'em clearly understand what the North Pole was—p'r'aps because I hain't a very clear notion on it myself. Anyhow, I made 'em understand that it wasn't a bit o' timber that you could cut your name on, as the college-man made out; so they told him that he didn't know nothing about jography.

"I do love the country, sir, though it ain't often, as you may think, that I can get into it. I've read the poet Cowper, and there's a bit in his 'Task' that I could ha' wrote myself, if I'd been on'y been a poet, an' knowed grammar. You laugh, sir—an' well you may. It do make a considerable diff'rence if you ain't a poet, an' if you don't know grammar; but I can admire worses for all that, though these ain't rightly worses—there's no rhyme.

"I'd a beautiful musk in that pot last 'ear—the pot seemed bilin' over with green an' goold—an' you can't think, sir, what a comfort it was to me. It was cheery to look at, just for the brightness of it; an' then it had a meanin' in it, too—like them blue and red texts they put up in the churches now-a-days, 'Consider the lilies of the field,' that's what my musk used to say; and it cheered up my bird there most as much as it did me. I used to let him out, an' he'd perch on the pot, an' rub his head into the leaves, just like a babby snugglin' up to the breast. I al'ays takes my Dick out with me when I goes into the country; an' when it's warm enough, I hangs his cage in a hedge as I'm a-restin', an' he pipes away over my head as jolly as them that has got their freedom.

"How them little dears do enjoy the fresh air! It makes 'em tipsy like. That first time I was tellin' you on, the little uns